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CONFIDENTIAL.

(8664.)

F.O. 424 208

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 8354.]

208

1905.

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Further Correspondence respecting Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 8354.]

No. 1.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January* 2, 1905.)

(No. 973.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 26, 1904.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 938 of the 6th instant, on the subject of a Report from Mr. Consul Longworth that leprosy had broken out among the Armenian prisoners at Trebizond, I have the honour to inclose copy of a despatch from the same officer stating that the disease proves to be scabies, and not leprosy.

I am, &c.

(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure in No. 1.

Consul Longworth to Mr. Townley.

(No. 20.)

Sir, *Trebizond, December* 9, 1904.

YOU will have received my telegram of last night worded as follows:—

"Just returned from a few days' excursion in my district. In my despatch of the 25th November, instead of 'leprosy' please read 'scabies.'"

It follows from the above that the young Armenians in prison simply caught the itch, and not the more dreaded disease. Their families must have heard of this with no little relief.

Furthermore, by the free application of the sulphur ointment, all such in gaol as were attacked by the contagious affection were speedily cured.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 2.

Foreign Office to Mr. E. Brooks.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 3, 1905.

WITH reference to your letter of the 8th ultimo, informing me of the contribution of 250*l.* by the "Friends of Armenia" for the relief of the refugees in the Moush and Sassoun district, I am directed by the Marquess of Lansdowne to transmit to you an extract from a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople respecting the distribution of the sum in question.*

I am, &c.

(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

* See Confidential Paper 8354, No. 255.

No. 3.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January* 9.)

(No. 3.)

Constantinople, January 3, 1905.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith, a copy of a despatch, from His Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, on the subject of the arrest of certain Turkish malefactors at Samsoun, illustrating the relative importance attached to political as opposed to criminal charges in Turkey.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 3.

Consul Longworth to Mr. Townley.

Trebizond, December 21, 1904.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith annexed copy of a despatch from Mr. de Cortanze reporting the arrest at Samsoun and the conveyance to Constantinople of four Turks of ill repute, charged with being revolutionary agitators.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 3.

Consular Agent de Cortanze to Consul Longworth.

Samsoun, le 18 *Décembre*, 1904.

M. le Consul,

J'AI l'honneur de porter à votre connaissance les faits suivants :—

Depuis déjà plus de deux ans, il y avait dans ce pays une sorte d'association entre quatre individus, nommés :

Ahmet Bey, faisant soit disant du commerce ;

Suleiman Bey, Avocat ;

Ahmet Bey, frère du susdit Suleiman, sans profession ;

Hassan Bey, Capitaine, Circassien.

Ces tristes personnages se sont rendus coupables de divers méfaits de droit commun, rapts de jeunes filles dans les campagnes, vols, chantages, contrebande de tabac, d'armes de poudre, &c.

Notre Gouverneur s'était plaint à diverses reprises de tout ce monde, mais ceux-ci, ayant des parents très hauts placés dans le Palais de Sa Majesté et même des relations de famille parmi les femmes, ne purent jamais être inquiétés.

Dernièrement, il est parvenu au Palais des dénonciations contre ces gens-là, les accusant d'être de "Jeunes Turcs," d'avoir des relations avec les divers comités d'Europe, de faire de la propagande révolutionnaire.

Il n'en fallait certes pas tant pour mettre en émoi tout le Gouvernement, et les résultats ne se firent pas attendre.

Jeudi, 15 courant, arrivait ici de Constantinople un officier supérieur de la police, avec ordre à notre Gouverneur et le Général commandant la place, de faire arrêter ces quatre personnages, de faire chez eux des perquisitions les plus minutieuses, et d'envoyer d'urgence, sous bon escort à Constantinople, les accusés et les objets saisis, papiers et autres.

Ces ordres furent exécutés Vendredi matin entre 12 et 2 heures à la Turque, et aujourd'hui (Dimanche), par le vapeur "Hadji Daout" ils ont été expédiés à Constantinople, sans avoir pu communiquer avec qui que cela soit.

Il m'est impossible, ainsi que vous le pensez bien, de vous assurer si réellement ces individus étaient des révolutionnaires ; en tout cas, à mon avis, ils étaient bien peu dangereuses sous ce rapport pour le Gouvernement. La seule chose que je puisse assurer, c'est qu'ils étaient de véritables bandits, et que tout ce qui leur arrive, et ce qui pourra leur arriver, sera un très juste châtiment à leur nombreux méfaits.

No. 3*.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January* 9.)

(No. 8.)

Constantinople, January 3, 1905.

My Lord,

THE Grand Vizier assured me yesterday that he had sent further moneys, amounting as far as I could gather to over 500*l.*, for distribution at Bitlis and Moush, and that further relief in kind had also been dispatched in considerable quantities, whilst some of the more destitute of the inhabitants of the mountains had come down into the warmer villages of the plain, where they would be able to find shelter and food during the winter months. They could return to their homes in the spring.

Mr. W. W. Peet, the Treasurer of the American Mission, called upon me this morning and explained to me that Mr. Cole, the Mission's representative at Bitlis, had received through him £ T. 2,960 for purposes of relief in the Moush and Sassoun districts during the past two or three months. Mr. Peet said that he had just forwarded a little over £ T. 600 to Bitlis, and that with this sum the estimated amount required for the relief of the distressed Armenians had been reached. He did not, however, propose to make any public statement to that effect, as he felt sure that any further sums that might be sent to him for that special purpose would come in useful for unforeseen contingencies, but he should make no further appeal on these people's behalf for the present.

He told me that the Armenian Œcumenical Patriarch had sent £ T. 300 through him. Mr. Peet added that in sending this money to Mr. Cole he had enjoined him to let it be known among the Armenians that the Patriarch was anxious for their welfare and had sent them assistance, and that he had impressed upon Mr. Cole that he should act in concert with the Armenian clergy and notables in the matter of the distribution, and should, as far as might be possible, fall in with their views.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

J'ai jugé intéressant de vous signaler ces faits, rigoureusement exacts en tout point.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) H. DE CORTANZE.

No. 4.

Mr. E. Brooks to Foreign Office.—(*Received January* 11.)

Dear Sir, *Duvals, Grays, Essex, January* 8, 1905.

I AM obliged by yours of the 3rd instant, giving me a portion of a letter signed by Mr. Walter Townley respecting a contribution of 250*l.* from the "Friends of Armenia" for relief in the Moush and Sassoun districts.

I have the pleasure to inform you that in addition to the 250*l.* therein mentioned we have since that date forwarded another cheque for 350*l.*, and hope to be able to add something more yet to those amounts.

Will you have the goodness to inform Lord Lansdowne of this communication.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. W. BROOKS,
Chairman of the Committee of the Friends of Armenia.

No. 4*.

Mr. E. W. Brooks to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January* 14.)

My Lord, *Duvals, Grays, Essex, January* 14, 1905.

THE letter, of which the inclosed is a copy, has just lately reached the Committee of the Friends of Armenia, written by one of the American missionaries stationed at Van, Dr. Ussher.

The information it contains is so important and so grievous that we think it right to pass on a copy to your Lordship, begging that you will be kind enough to read and bear it in your mind.

We can but unite in the cry which he quotes, "How long, O Lord, how long!" are these horrors to go on amongst a people whom we undertook to oversee for their general safety and welfare.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. W. BROOKS,
Chairman of the Committee of the Friends of Armenia.

Inclosure in No. 4*.

Letter from a Missionary in Armenia.

My dear Cousin, *Turkey in Asia, July* 26, 1904.

I AM wondering whether I shall be able to keep on the work here for three years more or not. I would not have you think for a moment that I am tired of my work I am thoroughly in love with it, and would not exchange it for any other place or work I know, but the condition of the country, the endless relentless oppression and suffering wears on one, and I feel like a man under water diving for treasure—I must get my head up and get a breath before I can plunge again. This constant suffering and abject poverty are depressing beyond description; I could stand seeing ordinary suffering and poverty, but to have added to it the awful galling oppression and abuse of the Turks, with no hope of relief, sickens one. Would that I had a pen like Harriet Beecher Stowe, or a tongue like William Lloyd Garrison, then I might make Europe and America realize what murder, and worse than murder, goes on daily in this land. England tries to put down slavery in Africa, but in this land, for which she is in a special sense answerable, she lets slavery, murder, and every sort of oppression be carried on against the nominally Christian population, and kills them off with her Consular investigations.

Now, while Captain Tyrrell is investigating the 3,000 murders in Sassoun, the Armenians are being killed off in twos and threes in this vilayet. There is no great

massacre to attract attention, but here and there Kurds kill a few men watering their fields, or cut the throats of villagers returning from the city. Then, though it is known that Kurds have done it, a few Armenians are seized, and, without the slighest reason, accused of the crime and thrown into prison, where they are tortured; or where a man sees his brother shot down beside him and knows the murderer well, and makes complaint, he is thrown into prison and tortured under accusation of being a revolutionist, and told if he dares to make complaint against his brother's murderer he will hang, or languish in prison till death.

I know of eleven recent murders, and though in the case of three of them I personally informed the Governor as to who the murderers were, not one has been arrested for the crimes, but the Armenians brave enough to make complaint and give testimony have been either imprisoned or threatened with death and generally terrorized. All Moslems carry arms, but a Christian found with an unloaded, rusty revolver in his possession is imprisoned and beaten. The tax collectors have drained the people to a greater degree of poverty than immediately after the massacres, and the destitution is awful. One cannot help sighing and crying out, "How long, O Lord, how long!"

The work is heavy enough, but it is the other things which are breaking the missionaries down. There are more ways than one of killing the Armenians, and the present methods are much more fatal to them than the great massacres of 1895 and 1896. Men formerly well to do, and even last year living in comfort, are now penniless. The tax collectors have by every kind of torture compelled those who had money to pay the taxes of those who were destitute. Having bled them white for back taxes and given no receipts, they demanded in advance the taxes due at the end of this year, *i.e.*, next March. Harvests are not yet in, and there is no ready cash in the hands of Armenians. The Recorder of Deeds accompanied the Government officials, Kaïmakam, &c., and where the new demand was not met at once, the fields of the Armenians were sold for from one-sixth to one-quarter their value to Kurds, the Kurds sometimes buying them for less than the value of the standing crops almost ripe. Thus the Armenians have been deprived, in the name of law, of the property which has been theirs for generations, and are reduced to absolute slavery. Those who, more bold than the rest, came into Van to make complaint and ask for mercy were immediately imprisoned and beaten. I must not write more in this strain.

The spiritual part of our work has been going forward as never before. At last Communion we received twelve young men, and there are about thirty more applicants; not all will be accepted but it is encouraging. Work in the villages goes on. We have applications for more teachers and preachers than we can supply. We are all well, but desperately tired. I have closed the hospital for a month, and to-morrow we all go to the lake shore for a vacation. I shall have to come in every second day and perhaps on Sundays, but hope to get a little rest when it is cooler. I have not time to write Lady Anderson; I inclose a Report for her.

If you can stir public opinion and Parliament with anything I have written do so, but keep my name out of print for the sake of the work.

No. 5.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 16.)

(No. 14. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January 9, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of despatches from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting upon the present exceedingly unsatisfactory state of the vilayet, and commenting upon the change that has recently come over the administration of the Vali, Nazim Pasha, who has up to now borne the character of an especially enlightened and painstaking official.

Nazim Pasha having always enjoyed the strong support of the French Embassy, I called upon M. Constans the day before yesterday and asked his Excellency whether he had received the same report of his unfortunate change of attitude as had reached me. M. Constans said that he much regretted that such was the case, and confirmed Mr. Wilkie Young's account of the present bad state of the province.

I to-day called the serious attention of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to events at Diarbekir, and told his Excellency that it would appear that the Vali was surrounded by undesirable advisers who had warped his better judgment. I named Hikmet Bey, the Vali's son, Niazi Bey, the President of the Municipality, and the Greek exile Mina Hamdopoula; and I suggested that as Hikmet Bey had official duties to perform at Salonica, it might be as well that he should return to his post without loss of time.

Tewfik Pasha, who took down the names of the three persons mentioned, expressed his surprise to hear that the conduct of Nazim Pasha had given cause for complaint, but promised that the matter should be reported to the proper quarter without loss of time, in order that the necessary inquiry might be made.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 5.

Acting Vice-Consul Young to Mr. Townley.

(No. 31.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, December 16, 1904.*

I DEEPLY regret to have to report that the state of affairs in this vilayet—after a brief period of amelioration—is once more most unsatisfactory.

During the past week two caravans have been attacked within twelve hours of the city itself; the lawlessness of the Kurds is once more unchecked, and the Christians of all denominations (nine churches are represented at Diarbekir) seem to be rapidly losing the confidence in Nazim Pasha, which all, or almost all, till recently professed.

As I have had on several occasions the honour to report, Nazim Pasha's administration was at first—and, indeed, till quite recently—characterized by impartiality, firmness, and (apparently) by a genuine desire to improve the condition of the vilayet. During the last few weeks, however, the change in his Excellency's attitude has been sudden and marked. He seems to have resigned himself wholly to the worst influences in his entourage, if not actually to have lost all initiative and power of decision.

His Excellency's position is doubtless one of great difficulty, owing to the very diverse elements in the Vilayet of Diarbekir, which a Vali must be prepared either to conciliate or control. On the one hand, the Christians are numerous and wealthy; and on the other, the Mahommedans are exceptionally ignorant and bigoted, while the Kurds of the surrounding country are quick to appreciate and turn to account the least symptom of weakness in the conduct of affairs.

The difficulty of the position is increased by the recognized system of espionage and intrigue, which makes it possible for a Vali to be constantly embarrassed, if not actually intimidated, by his inferiors, who may be at any moment in telegraphic communication with persons of influence at Constantinople. In the present case it would seem reasonable to suppose that the cause of Nazim Pasha's sudden change of front may be found either in the wane of his personal influence with his chiefs or in a mistaken impression that a departure from his former policy of impartiality and firmness will find favour at Constantinople. This last impression would no doubt be implanted and fostered to the best of their power by the leaders of the fanatical party at Diarbekir.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. E. WILKIE YOUNG.

Inclosure 2 in No. 5.

Acting Vice-Consul Young to Mr. Townley.

(No. 33. Confidential.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, December 21, 1904.*

REFERRING to my despatches Nos. 31 and 32 of the 16th and 20th December respectively (forwarded by this mail), and having regard to the evil influence exercised by several unscrupulous persons in this vilayet, matters have now reached such a pass that I venture to mention the three most conspicuous among them by name, in the hope that it may be found possible to take some steps to check their influence before the position of the Vali is completely undermined.

1. Hikmet Bey, son of the Vali, and till recently "Directeur des Affaires Politiques" at Salonica, has now been at Diarbekir, nominally on "leave" for nearly twelve months. He has therefore, of course, no official status in this vilayet. Nevertheless, he has contrived during his short stay to amass very considerable sums of

money through his influence with his father; and he has generally acquired a most evil reputation. His conduct in connection with the Chavrashian murder is particularly unsatisfactory, and there can be no possible excuse for the very active efforts which he has made throughout to prevent an impartial investigation. In the interests of the vilayets, no less than of his Excellency's prestige, it is sincerely to be hoped that Hikmet Bey may shortly be recalled to his post.

2. Nazi Bey has occupied the position of President of the Municipality for about three years. He is known locally for his rabid fanaticism, open corruption, and consistent opposition to the Christians. He has taken a very conspicuous part in connection with the Chavrashian murder, and openly expresses his determination to "obtain the conviction of the Armenians" who are now in prison. It was at his home that Hamdullah Bey (Ref. No. 32 of the 20th December) stayed during his recent visit to Diarbekir.

3. Mina Hamdopoulo has filled the post of Vali Mouavin at Diarbekir for about five years. I am personally not acquainted with him, but it would seem that he has earned the execration of all the Christians during his period of office. He, too, is interesting himself peculiarly in the present case; and, instead of exerting his legitimate influence to obtain a fair inquiry into the facts, he has openly thrown in his lot with the influential clique whose avowed purpose is to "secure the conviction of the Christians." Mani Hamdopoulo is a Greek, and an "exile" at Diarbekir.

In venturing to bring the names of these three individuals before His Majesty's Embassy, I am acting in harmony with my French colleague, M. Guys, who tells me that he is writing to his Excellency the French Ambassador in the same sense.

There is perhaps still reason to hope that if these persons—or as many of them as may be found expedient—who contrive to make their baneful influence felt in every Department of the Administration of the province, are removed from Diarbekir, Nazim Pasha, whose period of office began so auspiciously a year and a-half ago, may yet be recalled to a sense of his duties before he has committed himself hopelessly by some further act of flagrant injustice.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. WILKIE YOUNG.

No. 6.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January* 16.)

(No. 15. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 9, 1905.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 14 of to-day's date upon the subject of the unsatisfactory state of the Vilayet of Diarbekir, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship copies of despatches from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at that place, reporting upon a brutal murder of an Armenian photographer named Stepan Chavrashian and his aged mother at the village of Saur, near Diarbekir.

I to-day called the very serious attention of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to this incident, and represented that the loathsome brutality of the crime itself was sufficient to merit strong representations, but that the case was much aggravated by the action of the Vali and his advisers.

I explained to Tewfik Pasha that the evidence in my possession left small doubt in my mind that the two Kurds, the creatures of Hamdullah Bey, were the actual murderers, and that they had been incited to perform the crime by the above-named Notable, who had paid them £12 a-piece for their act of butchery. Everything, I said, pointed to these men as the undoubted criminals; and yet the Vali, in spite of the fact that he had acknowledged to both the British and French Vice-Consuls that he believed in the guilt of the two Kurds, had done, and was doing all he could to incriminate innocent Armenians, on the ridiculous plea that as rival photographers they must have desired the murdered man's death, whilst no steps had been taken to arrest the real murderers, and the instigator of the crime, Hamdullah Bey, had been received with honour by the Vali and his satellites since the crime had become known.

I dwelt upon the iniquity of the treatment of the six Armenians arrested, and said that the Vice-Consuls had been given positive proof that three of them had been brutally tortured to make them incriminate the three others. I said that such action as that reported naturally created partisanship between Christians and Mussulmans, and that both sides were now eagerly watching to see which would have the better of the struggle.

I warned his Excellency that any sign of partiality towards the Mussulmans by the Turkish officials would be eagerly taken by the Kurds and others as a signal from the Government, and that the most serious results might follow in a country where so much Christian blood had been shed but recently, and in which there was unfortunately great danger of further outrages upon the Christian population at no distant date unless the Government did their duty, and I must hold him responsible, I said, that a most searching inquiry would be made.

Tewfik Pasha took copious notes of the incident, which I recounted to him in detail, and promised that all that was necessary to bring the real culprits to justice should be done. His Excellency agreed with me that it might be well, should it be found that party feeling was running high at Diarbekir, to remove the hearing of the case to Aleppo or some other place.

I have spoken to the French Ambassador on the subject. His Excellency is not yet in possession of his Vice-Consul's report, but promised me that he would support my action at the Porte as soon as he was in a position to do so.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 6.

Acting Vice-Consul Young to Mr. Townley.

(No. 32.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, December* 20, 1904.

I REGRET to have to report a peculiarly revolting murder which was discovered on the 19th November last, having been committed, it is supposed, three days previously—viz., on the evening of Wednesday, 16th November. The victims are an Armenian photographer, Stepan Chavrashian, age about 35, and his mother, Lucig Chavrashian, age about 70. The bodies were horribly mutilated.

Any interest which the crime may have outside the district lies in the manner in which legal proceedings in connection with it are being conducted. Public opinion among Moslems and Christians alike is unanimous in fixing the guilt upon two or more Kurds, but the authorities have been and are making the most determined and shameless efforts to incriminate several Armenians, who have been detained in prison for over a month; while it would seem that so far no attempt has been made to arrest and examine the Kurds referred to.

The Vali has twice admitted to me his conviction that the Armenians are innocent, and that the Kurds are guilty, but at the same time he protests that he is unable to procure the release of the former, or to take the ordinary measures for the arrest of the latter, who have now been at large more than four weeks.

Hitherto I have had no reason to doubt his Excellency's sincerity, but his attitude latterly has so entirely changed that it seems desirable to submit, without further delay, all the circumstances as they have been brought to my notice, particularly as it becomes daily more evident that the conduct of the present case very nearly affects the relations existing between His Imperial Majesty's Christian and Mahommedan subjects in this vilayet.

On the 2nd December it became generally known that three of the six Armenians then in prison had been tortured or intimidated in order to elicit from them statements which would incriminate the others. M. Guys, the French Vice-Consul, and myself were so certain of our information on this point that we decided to bring the matter in a friendly and unofficial manner to the knowledge of the Vali. During our visit, and in accordance with our wishes, one of the prisoners in question was brought into his Excellency's presence. He at once confessed that the statement which he had made the day before to the Vali himself was absolutely false, and had only been elicited by the sufferings he had undergone, and under the influence of threats of worse to come. He showed us a considerable wound on his back, another on his ear (to which, he said, some instrument of torture had been applied), and further assured us that he had been bastinadoed and severely beaten on other parts of his body. The name of this man is Jacoub Ketchejian. He gave the names of several persons who had been present while he was tortured, and among them mentioned an aide-de-camp to his Excellency, and his Excellency's nephew.

It seems that this man Jacoub's daughter was simply threatened and intimidated, but his brother-in-law, Orinchus, was subjected to the thumb-screw.

It is on the evidence of these three persons, extracted by violence and admittedly false, that the three Armenians, Asfurian, Tigran, and Mendeljian are detained in prison.

I cannot discover that there is any other evidence against any one of these three at all, beyond the circumstance "that they are all photographers, and were therefore, no doubt, professional rivals of the murdered man."

With regard to the Kurds, on the other hand, the following points are certain :—

Hamdullah Bey, a Kurdish Magistrate, had a dispute at law of some fifteen years' standing with the deceased over a piece of land which the former was very anxious to add to his estates at Saur, but the titles were in the hands of the latter, and his right to them had so far been upheld by the Courts.

On the night when the murder was committed, two Kurds, Aleko and Fakhi Yousuf, who are "serfs" of Hamdullah Bey, came to Diarbekir from his village of Saur; they left their horses at a khan, and went away for the whole night. Very early in the morning they returned, and, taking their horses, left the city.

When the murder was discovered the title-deeds to the property were missing, and several circumstances, including the peculiar manner in which the corpses were mutilated, pointed to the fact that the persons who had been in the house were Kurds, and not people of the city.

On the 4th December news arrived at Diarbekir that it was common gossip at Saur that Aleko and Fakhi Yousuf were the murderers, and that the former had already made his escape.

On the 12th December an inhabitant of Saur, who is in the employment of the French Vice-Consulate, came to Diarbekir, and informed M. Güys in my presence that, on their return to Saur, Aleko and Fakhi Yousuf had openly boasted of the crime; had, moreover, displayed in the presence of five persons the nose, one eye, one ear, &c., of the murdered man, and likewise parts of the body of his unfortunate mother, and had received from their master, Hamdullah Bey, 12*l.* each as the promised reward for the deed.

All the above facts, which are undisputed, have been laid before the Vali, but so far no serious attempt has been made to arrest either Hamdullah or the two Kurds. Far from it. Hamdullah came openly to Diarbekir during Bairam and was entertained by Niazi Bey, President of the Municipality, and by his Excellency himself, and subsequently returned unmolested to his village.

Such are the circumstances of the case as known and commented on throughout the city, and it must be added that the Vali's attitude has been such as to arouse the gravest mistrust. During the first few days after the occurrence he showed an extraordinary desire to convince M. Güys and myself of the guilt of the Armenians and the innocence of the Kurds. This was entirely gratuitous, as, till then, neither of us had expressed an opinion on the subject, or, indeed, appeared to interest ourselves in the matter at all. Subsequently, when it became evident that a larger issue was involved, and the question was becoming one of Mahommedans as against Christians, we jointly urged his Excellency to take steps to insure an impartial investigation. He promised that he would do so, but it has now become evident that he has wilfully deceived us, and has from the outset (for some reason not yet apparent) been doing his utmost to incriminate the Armenians and arrange for the escape of the Kurds.

I need hardly add that the further conduct of this case is of the gravest importance to the whole Christian population of Diarbekir, who—no less than the Moslems—will deduce from the manner in which it is treated at Constantinople conclusions of the greatest significance for the future. Petitions and telegrams will no doubt be forwarded to Constantinople from both sides; and—considering that so many persons of local influence evidently take a keen and personal interest in the matter—I venture respectfully to suggest that it is most desirable that the case be transferred for hearing to the Tribunal of another vilayet. Aleppo would for many reasons be suitable, and the fact of its being outside the six vilayets and the residence of so many Consuls is an additional recommendation.

M. Güys, my French colleague, with whom I have acted in perfect accord in this matter, assures me that he is sending a full account of all that has occurred to the French Embassy by this mail.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. WILKIE YOUNG.

Inclosure 2 in No. 6.

Acting Vice-Consul Young to Mr. Townley.

(No. 34. Confidential.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, December* 23, 1904.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 32 of the 20th December, on the subject of the Chavrashian murder, I have the honour to report that, since posting that despatch, certain additional information has reached me, which would seem to throw considerable light on the motives of the principal actors in this sordid drama. It is said that they are now striving to obtain sanction and support for their action at Constantinople.

I have the honour to submit my information, which I think is reliable, and runs as follows :—

On the 10th November (?) Chavrashian (the murdered man) presents a bill of some £ T. 25 to £ T. 40 for photographic work done for the Vali. The latter objects that the charge is exhorbitant, and calls the former "Edebaiz," *i.e.*, a scoundrel. Chavrashian is annoyed, and insults his Excellency in the presence of several persons, among whom is Niazi Bey, President of the Municipality. Niazi Bey says, "Let me settle with the fellow," and the Vali (probably without considering his words) consents.

Shortly afterwards, Niazi Bey, full of his commission to bully a Christian, encounters Hamdullah Bey, who, it is well-known, is the enemy of Chavrashian, and the result of the interview is that Hamdullah sees his way to make an attack upon Chavrashian with every prospect of securing powerful protection in the event of trouble.

Three or four days later Chavrashian is found murdered, and all the evidence hitherto available goes to show that the murderers are the Kurds Aleko and Fakhi Yousouf, hired ruffians in the pay of Hamdullah Bey.

So far as I am able to ascertain, the above incidents are perfectly accurate, though their connection rests for the moment on conjecture. It is not suggested that either the Vali or Niazi Bey contemplated the fearful result of their words, or even that that result would not have taken place, had the words never been spoken. But, as it was, Hamdullah Bey would see in them his opportunity and act at once.

Considered in this light, the actions of all the parties in this sordid affair become perfectly consistent. The actual murderers of course made their escape, and, meanwhile, Hamdullah Bey, who feels himself safe, comes to Diarbekir to take counsel with Niazi. Secret consultations are held at the house of the Vali, with the result that it is decided at all costs to shield the Kurds and incriminate any available Armenians. The order given to the police to "look for the murderers in the city" is thus explained.

Six Armenians are thrown into prison and three of their number forced by torture to give false evidence against the rest. The Vali, though only indirectly responsible, yet feels that, were the whole story to become known, some scandal would attach to himself, is keenly and personally interested in "smothering" the affair. He orders his nephew and his aide-de-camp to be present while the prisoners are being tortured, and to "prime" them with the false evidence which they are afterwards to give in his own presence.

At this stage of the proceedings the matter was brought before M. Güys and myself, and any other circumstances which have come to my knowledge are stated in my despatch No. 32 of the 20th December.

I venture to suggest the above, with some confidence, as a probable key to the scandalous, and otherwise inexplicable, proceedings which have disgraced the Administration of this vilayet during the past four weeks.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. WILKIE YOUNG.

No. 7.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 16.)

(No. 17.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 10, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting cases of exactions on the part of Turkish officials in the Vilayet of Syria.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure in No. 7.

Consul Richards to Mr. Townley.

(No. 60.)

Sir, *Damascus, December 24, 1904.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you that orders have been received here from Constantinople to raise, by subscription ("Tyaneh"), a sum equal to the value of 400 horses, of which this city will contribute the counter-value of 100 horses, while the remaining 300—or their value—will be furnished by the other parts of the vilayet. The kind of horse required—for the original object seems to have been the supply of the horses themselves, allegedly for the use of the troops operating in Macedonia—is valued at £T. 17. Although this new expedient for extorting money is styled "subscription," or "voluntary contribution," there can be no doubt that in the outlying districts, though possibly not in the towns, considerable pressure will be brought to bear on the peasants in order to compel them to pay the required sums.

In this connection I might mention that the Commission, consisting of Abdurrahman Pasha, Mir Ali Pasha, and Mahmoud Pasha Boozo, who, as reported by me in my despatch No. 57 of the 21st ultimo, were sent to the Hauran to collect camels for the transport of provisions, ammunition, &c., for the use of the troops which it was then intended to send from Bagdad to the assistance of Ibn Reshid, the Emir of the Nejd, returned here in due course with 160 of these animals. In the meantime the Vali had been informed from Constantinople that plans had been changed so that the camels would no longer be required; but although I reported in the despatch above referred to that these fresh instructions had been transmitted to the Commission, it seems very doubtful now whether this really was done. At all events, the camels were brought here, and, being no longer required, were sold by the authorities for what they would fetch, and the money paid into the Government chest! Considering that these camels were taken, practically, by force from their owners, some of whom, when they heard that they would no longer be required, came and begged the Vali to restore their property to them, it is difficult to characterize such a wanton and high-handed act of spoliation in sufficiently strong terms. The only excuse for the Vali's conduct consists in the fact that he is so pressed for want of funds, whether for the expenses of the Haj or the current expenditure of the vilayet, that the temptation to lay his hands on a considerable sum of ready money was too strong for him!

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 8.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 16.)

(No. 31.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January 10, 1905.*

THE Grand Vizier, in speaking yesterday about the situation in the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey inhabited by Armenians, was inclined to show some resentment that a letter addressed by your Lordship's Department to an Anglo-Armenian Society, asking for funds for the relief of distress at Mush, had been published in the newspapers.

I replied that I had not seen such a letter, but that His Highness had no cause to complain of the fact, since I had made it clear to him, from the moment that it had become apparent that he could not produce the money he had promised me should be sent for the relief of the distress, that I must seek elsewhere for the requisite funds. This money had now been procured and sent on to Mush, where it would be duly distributed as had been arranged between us.

Ferid Pasha then turned the conversation to the state of affairs in the Erzeroum and Van districts. His Highness said that the Armenian inhabitants of the Caucasus had been very active of late, and that only quite recently a large consignment of ammunition destined for revolutionary purposes had been seized. He expressed his fear lest an important inroad of insurgents might not occur in the early spring, and said that the Turkish Government would in all probability find themselves obliged to increase their military strength on the Russian frontier, a measure which he hoped would not call forth Russian remonstrances.

I said that information in my possession led me to think that great vigilance would have to be employed to guard the frontier. Under the circumstances, I added, it was most desirable that no excuse should be given to the Kurds and other Mussulman populations to suppose that the Government favoured them rather than the Christians, and I impressed upon His Highness that the worst possible results might follow should the incident at Diarbekir which I had reported to the Minister for Foreign Affairs not be dealt with in a spirit of strictest impartiality.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

No. 9.

Treasurer of the Women's Armenian Relief Fund to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 17.)

My Lord, *Danehurst, Putney, January 16, 1905.*

THE members of my Committee desire me to inform you that the Province and City of Van appear to be threatened by famine this spring, partly owing to the extreme poverty of the people, and partly to the high price of grain. The general condition of poverty, we are informed by Dr. Raynolds (Head of the American Mission of Van), is due primarily to the course the Ottoman Government has been pursuing during the last year or two, but more especially during the last few months, in the way of collecting taxes—taking from the impoverished people the very necessaries of life when money has not been forthcoming.

In consequence of this policy, business is at a stand-still, tradesmen finding no sale for their goods, and work cannot be obtained.

My Committee venture to ask if it is possible for your Lordship to represent to the Sublime Porte, through His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, the terrible condition of affairs in Armenia, in the hope that such representation may mitigate the burden of excessive taxation for a time at least, as has been effected on previous occasions.

I have, &c.

(Signed) MADELEINE COLE,

Honorary Treasurer of the Women's Armenian Relief Fund.

No. 10.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Townley.

(No. 25.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January 20, 1905.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 14, Confidential, of the 9th instant, respecting the present unsatisfactory state of the Diarbekir Vilayet.

I approve your action in calling the attention of the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs to the matter, and the language used by you to his Excellency on this subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 11.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Townley.

(No. 26.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January 20, 1905.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 31 of the 10th instant, reporting a conversation with the Grand Vizier relative to a letter, recently published in the press, which was addressed to the Anglo-Armenian Society by this Department respecting the supply of funds for relief of distress at Moush, and to the state of affairs in the Erzeroum and Van districts.

I approve your language to Ferid Pasha on this occasion.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 12.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Townley.

(No. 28.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January 21, 1905.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 15, Confidential, of the 9th instant, relative to the unsatisfactory state of the Vilayet of Diarbekir and the murder of the Armenian Stopan Chavrashian and his mother at the village of Saur.

I approve your language to Tewfik Pasha on this subject. You should continue to press the matter on the attention of the Porte.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE

No. 13.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 43.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 17, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Bussorah reporting an attack by Arabs on the Government House of Gorna Caza, at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure in No. 13.

Acting Consul Monahan to Mr. Townley.

(No. 61.)
Sir, *Bussorah, December 23, 1904.*

I HAVE the honour to report, as an illustration of apparently awakening independence among Arabs, that, towards the end of last month, the Chief of a small tribe which was settled near Gorna, at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates, was imprisoned by the Kaïmakam of Gorna for robbery and extortion committed against other tribes, and that, on the 30th ultimo, a large armed band of Arabs of the tribe entered the town and attacked the Turkish soldiers at the Government House, slightly wounding two of them, and frightened the Kaïmakam into immediately releasing and giving up to them their Chief, though it is said that two or three Arabs were killed by the soldiers. Eighty soldiers were sent from here to Gorna, but there seems to have been no result, except that the tribe has disappeared from its old haunts to set up its reed huts elsewhere.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

No. 14.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 45.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 17, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 871, Secret, of the 15th November, 1904, I have the honour to report that a Mission left Constantinople yesterday to examine the petroleum deposits in the Mosul and Bagdad districts. An Italian expert in petroleum, M. Cesare Porro, is at the head of the expedition, which is also accompanied by Professor Kiesling, a Swiss engineer and expert, and by Professor Quandt, formerly Commercial Attaché to the German Embassy here, and who for the last two years has been in the service of the Deutsche Bank.

There is also an engineer from the Internationale Baugesellschaft of Frankfort-sur-Maine attached to the Mission. The object of the expedition is to ascertain whether there is any possibility of uniting all the different petroliferous districts by means of a narrow-gauged railway. It is expected that the Mission will be absent ten

No. 15*.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 30.)

(No. 54. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 24, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum upon the subject of the internal condition of the vilayet and the rumours that the troops there are committing excesses.

I requested Mr. Shipley to furnish me with this report, in consequence of a somewhat alarming communication made to me a short time ago by the Russian Ambassador to the effect that a terrible state of things existed in the villages about Erzeroum, and that the troops were committing the most abominable excesses. M. Zinoview informed me that the reports he had received from the Russian Consul-General were to a considerable extent based upon letters which had been addressed to his British colleague.

It would appear evident from Mr. Shipley's statement that M. Zinoview was under a misapprehension, and it is probable that the confusion arose from some obscurely-worded passages in the Russian Consul's cypher messages. M. Zinoview has not since reverted to the question, and I do not propose to allude to the matter unless his Excellency begins the conversation.

I do not see that the situation calls for any present representations to the Turkish Government beyond repeating the warning I have already given that vigilance on the frontier must not be relaxed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure in No. 15*.

Acting Consul Shipley to Mr. Townley.

(No. 2.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, January 4, 1905.*

IN answer to your telegrams of the 2nd and 3rd instant, and in continuation of my immediately preceding despatch, I have the honour to report that there is no foundation for the statement made to you that information regarding excesses committed by the troops in the villages of this vilayet was "partly derived" from me.

I saw my Russian colleague yesterday, and he denied having quoted me in support of the statements he had made in his last report on the condition of this vilayet, statements which, regrettable as much is in the administration of this district, I cannot but regard as exaggerated. What he did report concerning me is a matter which I had not yet reported to you, as it struck me as too melodramatic, and of not sufficient interest unless followed up by further developments.

About three weeks ago an Armenian, in whom I have full confidence, informed me that he had seen a letter addressed to another Armenian, a Russian subject, from Kars, informing him that the local Committee were planning an attack on the vilayet and the town itself of Erzeroum. A week later a well-dressed Armenian, whom I do not know, brought me a letter, which he said he could only give me on condition that I promised not to try and discover his identity after reading it. I was on the point of giving the man into custody, when I changed my mind and promised.

The letter purported to come from a member of the Committee at Kars, was written in Turkish, and unsigned. It was addressed to the British Consul at Erzeroum, and repeated the information given in the previous one to the Armenian merchant. After inveighing against the tyranny of the Turkish Government and the inaction of the British, it ended with a threat against me as Representative of the latter.

I regret to say that, after having finished reading this document, I put it on the table, whence it was abstracted by the Armenian while I was showing him the door.

He asked me whether I had any answer to give, and I replied only that I was glad to have had the letter, if it were genuine, as it showed up the unscrupulous and ruffianly set of men who constituted the so-called Kars Committee in their true character of common brigands living on the local Armenians, and that in thus divulging their plans beforehand they had exonerated the local government from all blame for anything that might happen in the spring; that, however, I considered the letter as a slightly dangerous practical joke, and attached no importance to it.

And this is, in fact, my conviction, though I do not believe that the man who ran the risk of bringing it me knew it.

I communicated the fact of the receipt of the letter and its contents to both the Vali and my Russian colleague, suppressing, however, all mention of the personal threat, which I would venture to request you, Sir, also to consider as confidential, especially in view of my approaching departure from Erzeroum.

I impressed on my Russian colleague the necessity for greater energy on the part of the Kars authorities, telling him frankly that I could not believe that they were unable to obtain information of Armenian intrigues and the assembling of Armenian bands, sometimes 200 strong, in the villages between Kars and the frontier. He was a good deal perturbed, especially at the idea of such a letter having come by the Russian post, and I am inclined to think that this is the only connection in which he can have mentioned my name to his Ambassador.

On the same day that I saw M. de Seriabine, I also had occasion to interview an Armenian peasant from the village of Todoveren, in the Passinler. I questioned him at considerable length, cautiously at first, but afterwards putting leading questions to him, and I could extract no suggestion of excesses on the part of the troops from him. He complained of their overbearing manner, of their "exactions" (*i.e.*, food for man and beast), but denied that there was any actual ill-treatment or any violence toward the women.

Next day I saw the Vali, and told him that I had been directed to report on the condition of the villages in his vilayet where troops were stationed, and that such information as I had was not very satisfactory.

His Excellency quite agreed with me, but said he could do nothing; that, on the one hand, the troops had been left in the villages during the winter, although he did not think it necessary; and that on the other the War Office and the Mushir could not agree on the number and cost of the barracks and guard-houses necessary along the frontier, and had therefore done nothing but send a Commission to inquire; that winter had come and no result been arrived at.

With regard to the statement that the troops lived on the villagers, he said that he was not sure that it still held good, though it was true in the summer; that he had done his possible to prevent it; that he had taken the contract for the supply of the food of the village garrisons out of the hands of the official at Hassan Kaleh, and given it to a man in Erzeroum, and that he intended superintending the business himself to prevent former abuses.

His Excellency is doing his utmost for the proper administration of this vilayet, and the more I see of his work the more I am convinced of his honest intentions. At the present moment he is practically at his wits' ends for lack of money, and the whole of the Government machinery is at a standstill. A fortnight ago the whole town was saying that he had quarrelled with the Commission of Finance, and that he had sent in his papers, which had been accepted. I went to congratulate him, but found it was not true. He has now been raised to the rank of Vezier, which is certainly encouraging for him, considering the firm attitude he has taken up in opposition to the demands for money of the Commission.

Last year his Excellency drew up a Budget, as I reported at the time, and arranged with the Mushir that military expenses should not exceed £T. 200,000 a-year. This left him with a yearly deficit of £T. 60,000, for which he was authorized last summer to draw on the neighbouring vilayets. Not only have these latter absolutely disregarded his draughts, but the military expenses have been increased by £T. 45,000 owing to the raising of the battalions to 600 or 700 men, and at present there is literally not enough money in the vilayet exchequer to pay for their daily bread. In conclusion, I would resume that I made no statement to my Russian colleague or any one else regarding excesses on the part of the troops in the villages; that I do not believe such to exist; that what vexations the Armenian peasants have to put up with from the soldiers in the villages are the natural outcome of the present condition of things, and of their own intrigues during the past fourteen months, and that there is no remedy possible till the spring, and then only if the Sublime Porte will attend to some at least of the Vali's recommendations before the winter comes on again; and I would venture to suggest the removal of Tahir Bey, Mutessarif of Khinis, and Mehemed Ali Effendi, Colonel commanding the regular battalions at Bayezid, both of them corrupt, incapable, and mischievous.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. SHIPLEY.

months, and the expenses, which are calculated at 420,000 fr. (16,800*l.*), are to be entirely borne by the Deutsche Bank, to which institution the Anatolian Railway has made over their concession, keeping for themselves a 10 per cent. share of future profits. The Civil List will also have a fair share, and the Sultan is giving the Mission every facility.

In the event of a satisfactory report, it is intended to form a trust with the Roumanian Petroleum Company, the Société "Steare Romania," which is also in the hands of the Deutsche Bank, and it is hoped that it may be found possible to make an arrangement with the British Petroleum Company, which is engaged in Persia on the borders of the Mosul and Bagdad Vilayets.

I have inquired of Messrs. Gilchrist, who represent Mr. Nicholls here during his absence, whether they have any cognizance of such an intention or of the objects of the present Mission. I have ascertained that they have no information on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

No. 15.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Townley.

(No. 30.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January 28, 1905.*

I TRANSMIT to you herewith copy of a letter from the Women's Armenian Relief Fund,* respecting the state of affairs at Van.

I request that you will furnish me with a report on the statements made in this letter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 16.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 30.)

(No. 60.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 24, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 15, Confidential, of the 9th instant upon the subject of the murder of Stepan Chavrashian, near Diarbekir, I have the honour to state that the Grand Vizier told me about ten days ago that the culprit, a Mussulman, had been arrested, and that the British and French Vice-Consuls had expressed their thanks to the Vali.

Having had no confirmation of this statement from Diarbekir, I telegraphed to Mr. Vice-Consul Young to ascertain if it was true. He replied, by telegraph, that it was stated that a man had been arrested, but that no prisoner had arrived.

I told the Grand Vizier yesterday of the answer I had received, and represented that he must have been deceived by the Vali. His Highness at once dispatched a telegram making further inquiries.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

No. 17.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 30.)

(No. 66.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 25, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report that Hassan Bey, Vali of Kharput, has been forced to resign his post, and that Abdul Rahman Fehmi, an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been appointed in his place. Mr. Acting Vice-Consul Wilkie Young considers that Hassan Bey has done good work, and that his departure is greatly to be regretted on every account.

* No. 9.

The Grand Vizier speaks highly of Fehmi Bey as an honest and energetic official, but I believe he is not popular in his present office, and he has been described to me as a fanatical anti-Christian.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

No. 18.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 79.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 31, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 60 of the 24th instant, respecting the murder of Stepan Chavrashian near Diarbekir, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a Memorandum by Mr. Lamb, reporting the arrest of the murderer and his accomplice.

I have received a telegram from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, stating that the two Kurds accused of the murder arrived at that town, under arrest, on the 29th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure in No. 18.

Memorandum by Mr. Lamb.

(No. 31.)

THE Vali of Diarbekir telegraphed to the Grand Vizier on the 11th (24th) instant to the effect that Aliko, one of the murderers of the photographer Stepan Chavrashian and his mother, was arrested some time ago in the Caza of Sor, as he had previously reported, and that he (the Vali) had a letter from our Vice-Consul congratulating him on the capture. Aliko's accomplice, Faki Yussouf, was also arrested on the 10th (23rd) instant, and was in custody at Mardin, but measures had been taken to have them both brought to Diarbekir.

The Vali expresses the opinion that the fact of both culprits having been hunted down and captured within two months of the crime proves the vigour and assiduity with which the local authorities have followed this matter up.

(Signed) H. H. LAMB.

January 26, 1905.

No. 19.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 84.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 6, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, reporting on the condition of the Trebizond Vilayet in 1904.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure in No. 19.

Consul Longworth to Mr. Townley.

(No. 3.)
Sir, *Trebizond, January 19, 1905.*

IN connection with my previous reports of the quarterly and annual series, I would beg leave to submit here some observations on the administrative condition of the Trebizond Vilayet during the year 1904.

Viewed from a general stand-point, affairs presented a normal aspect. No marked amelioration took place. Each branch of the administration performed its duties in the

No. 17.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Townley.

(No. 38.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 3, 1905.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 54, Confidential, of the 24th ultimo, relative to the state of affairs in the Vilayet of Erzeroum, and a communication made to you on this subject by the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople.

I concur in your view that the situation does not call for any present representations to the Turkish Government, beyond a repetition of the warning you have already given that vigilance on the frontier must not be relaxed.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 18.

Foreign Office to "Friends of Armenia."

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 8, 1905.*

I AM directed by the Marquess of Lansdowne to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th ultimo, forwarding a communication from the Committee of the "Friends of Armenia," in which they urge the need of increasing the number of British Consuls in the districts of that part of the Turkish Empire which are most liable to disturbance.

There are at the present time the following British Consular officers in the districts in question:—

A Consul at Erzeroum.

A Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, in whose jurisdiction Kharput is also included.

A Vice-Consul at Bitlis, who pays occasional visits to Moush.

A Vice-Consul at Van, who frequently travels. In the course of last year he paid repeated visits to Moush, and went twice to Sasun.

This staff has hitherto been regarded as sufficient, and his Lordship feels sure that you will recognize that the members of it have done much to prevent and alleviate suffering in Sasun and the neighbouring districts during the past year, and also that the representations of His Majesty's Ambassador to the Turkish Government during the autumn of 1903 and the spring of 1904 materially contributed to prevent more serious developments.

The representations of the Committee will, however, be borne in mind, and they may rest assured that His Majesty's Embassy will carefully watch the course of events during the coming spring, and will make every effort to prevent any abuse of their power by the local authorities and troops.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

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usual listless and perfunctory manner. The assumption of the slightest responsibility was avoided, and questions of even the paltriest kind were referred to Constantinople. Many remain unanswered, and therefore undecided and perhaps forgotten. The centralization of power at Yildiz is evidently conducive to only a good and orderly Government of a superficial character.

The Vali Reshad Bey has now been here nearly two years, with the result to himself, that the death of his predecessor, Kadri Bey, is more than ever mourned. He has certainly proved to be an extremely weak administrator. Whatever abilities he may have are carefully concealed. Much though he may try to shroud himself in mystery and hide his character, the people consider him a nonentity. They regard him, in fact, as very little better than an automatic machine for the distribution of documents to the various departments.

Happily for the province, there are some functionaries public-spirited enough to do what good they can. The majority of them are, perhaps, a little too cautious. It would be surprising were they otherwise, considering how precarious is their tenure of office. The great dread of the Turkish official is apparently the backbiting proclivities of the ubiquitous spies. It cannot but have a demoralizing effect, however much it may strengthen the clique at the Palace. Few, therefore, can be found to execute boldly what conscience and justice dictate. Among these the foremost is Hamdi Bey, the Mutessarif of Samsoun; next to him comes Vegleri Bey, the Assistant Governor General at Trebizond. The latter, though a Greek, appears to have gained the confidence and esteem of even the Moslem officials. His usefulness, however, is not allowed to be too prominently in evidence. Whether actuated by jealousy or bigotry, Reshad Bey keeps him well in the background. I would particularly point out the fact that the Vali insists on being represented not by the Moavin, but by the Kadi. Considering that Vegleri Bey holds the same high civil grade as his Excellency, it is surely he whom he should ask to preside over the administrative Council in his not infrequent absence, caused by either slight ailments or a fit of indolence.

The gendarmerie of the vilayet has already been described by me in my report of the 1st November as wholly deficient for the requirements of the province. The force is badly officered and manned, paid and clothed. It certainly needs a thorough reorganization and an assimilation, if possible, to the gendarmerie of European Turkey. The Government may have some such scheme in view, for orders have been received lately to discontinue the enlistment of men for the service. The gaps caused by desertion cannot, and should not, be left open long, for the force is already weak, its strength being at present 860 foot and 172 horse, including 85 officers. It is worth noting here that half the officers are illiterate, and that only 18 of the gendarmes are Christians. The police is a little better organized, and is comparatively superior, both physically and intellectually. The corps consists of twenty-one commissaries and sixty-one men, of whom two are Greeks and one is an Armenian.

Public security in the three districts of Samsoun, Gumushkhaneh and Rizeh was fairly well maintained; not so, however, in that of Trebizond. Fire, steel, and bullet, it is said, have rendered life and property in the district almost as uncertain as in the days before Kadri Bey. A progressive increase in crime is unfortunately too evident, even in the figures furnished me by the authorities. The records of murder alone stand at 127 as against 43 in 1903, while assaults with violence number 73. The returns further show that 4 lives were lost in venereal offences, 15 in acts of brigandage, and 109 in cases of vengeance, blood-feud and drunken broil. Only three brigands were killed during the year, but 344 criminal offenders were captured. Fewer would doubtlessly have been caught, had not the village youths aided the executive by joining in the pursuit.

All the prisons in the vilayet are overcrowded, and the one at Sinope, the central gaol of the coast, is full. No such congestion occurred in Kadri Bey's time. The summary application of the bastinado was then resorted to, and consequently much fewer were the offenders kept in custody. The Trebizond gaol, which can only hold 400 prisoners, has at times more than 600 incarcerated within its walls. It contained at the end of December 434 Moslems, 58 Christians, and 15 women, a hundred or so having been a little previously either released or transferred elsewhere. The question of enlarging the prison, so often contemplated in the past, has now become one of urgent necessity. The outlay it would entail, however, estimated at £ T. 850, appears to stand in the way of constructing the additional wards. Permission to incur the expenditure has been asked, but the sanction of the Porte has not yet been obtained.

The law courts, in their formalities, are less irregular than in former years. Justice, however, is not always administrated with strict impartiality. This is to be

regretted, for in a country where there is but little liberty there should at least be more equity. The worst evil is not on the surface, but deeply rooted and not easily eradicated. I mean by this the susceptibility of the officials to outside influences. Few are the judges and assessors who are neither corrupt nor biased, and consequently few are the people who seek redress by having recourse to the law. It is the Government that generally prosecutes, and yet no less than 1,234 indictable offences were brought before the courts at Trebizond. The figures for the year stand thus: Cases tried by the Court of Appeal 328, and by the Correctional Tribunal 680. Cases under trial at the Court of Appeal 97, and at the Correctional Tribunal 129. The convicted number as follows: 328 to less than one year's imprisonment, 67 from one to five, 9 from five to ten, 49 from ten to fifteen, and 4 for life. One was sentenced to death, who, with 32 others, including the four condemned to perpetual imprisonment, are young Armenian political prisoners. All but five of them are from fourteen to twenty years of age, and yet less clemency was shown them than to habitual criminals. A list of their names will be found in my despatch of the 26th September. Should these boys be really made to undergo long years of penal servitude simply because they were terrorized into subscribing their names to a bogus revolutionary society, it would be worse than unjust, it would be cruel.

Fiscal affairs have become rather complicated. New taxes, dues, fees, and stamps have of late years been sprung upon the people unawares and indiscriminately. The inhabitants are thus being made to pay more and more towards the maintenance of the Empire. Charges and surcharges are imposed, however little is done to foster trade and promote industry. What prosperity there be is due mainly to the products of the soil. It is much to be regretted, therefore, that all the crops of the year, except filberts, were small in quantity and poor in quality.

The financial Commission sitting at Constantinople is making itself felt. Two treasurers of this province have already been summarily dismissed for not abiding strictly by its instructions. Stringent orders were moreover received to carry out the census work with the least possible delay. At the present rate of progress, however, at least two years will be required to accomplish the task; for even the reassessment of lands and buildings begun in December 1901 has not yet reached completion.

The following are the items of the provincial budget for the Turkish financial year 1319 (ended the 14th March, 1904. Revenue: Tithes, £T. 155,320; land tax, £T. 84,550; military exemption tax, £T. 45,780; sheep tax, £T. 30,675; title deeds and transfers, £T. 11,215; judicial fees and fines, £T. 5,920; trade licences, £T. 5,655; public works, £T. 10,980; mines and forests, £T. 5,785; state lands, £T. 105; sundries, £T. 2,625; making a total of £T. 358,610, as against £T. 366,235 in 1318. Expenditure: Gendarmerie, £T. 29,196; civil service, £T. 23,538; fiscal, £T. 22,625; magistracy, £T. 15,862; pensions, £T. 3,444; police, £T. 3,586; mines and forests, £T. 2,344; sundries, £T. 5,521; making a total of £T. 100,116, as against £T. 97,925 in 1318. The surplus withdrawn by assignments amounted to £T. 258,494, which, compared with the year 1318, shows a decrease of £T. 9,806.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 20.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 88.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 7, 1905.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 66 of the 25th ultimo, reporting the appointment of Abdul Rahman Fehmi as Vali of Kharput in the place of Hassan Bey, who has been made a Member of the Council of State, I have the honour to state that the Grand Vizier told me yesterday that Abdul Rahman Fehmi is to start for his new post to-day.

His Highness added that he had spoken very earnestly to the new Vali, and had enjoined upon him that he should follow the example of his predecessor in conciliating the Christian elements under his jurisdiction, and that he should never lose sight of the importance of maintaining strict impartiality in his dealings between Christians and Mussulmans. He had impressed upon the new Vali that he must maintain order and tranquillity in the vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

No. 21.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 91.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 7, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 60 of the 24th ultimo, I have the honour to report that I have received a telegram from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, stating that the two murderers, the Kurds Aliko and Piki Youssouf, of Stepan Chavrushian and his mother have been arrested and brought to Diarbekir, where they have confessed their guilt. Mr. Wilkie Young adds, however, that the Vali summoned one of these men and six Armenians to his konak, when the Kurd, while acknowledging his guilt, asserted that the Armenians were his abettors and accomplices. Mr. Young represents that this action of the Vali is irregular, and that it would seem to support the contention that he is endeavouring to incriminate the Armenians.

I yesterday expressed to the Grand Vizier my satisfaction that the murderers had been caught and brought to justice. I took the occasion to tell his Highness of the communication I had received from Diarbekir, and requested him to take such steps as might be necessary to insure that no innocent persons were incriminated. I pointed out that the attitude of the Vali in mixing himself up in a case that was under trial was quite irregular.

Ferid Pasha promised that he would see that justice was done, and added that he had written to the Vali to send his son away from Diarbekir. Your Lordship will remember that, as reported in my despatch No. 14, Confidential, of the 9th ultimo, I called the attention of the Porte to the evil influence which this son, Hikmet Bey, was said to have acquired over Nazim Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

No. 22.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 95.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 7, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 897 of the 23rd November, and to other correspondence respecting the resettlement of Armenians in the Sassun and neighbouring districts, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a full, capable, and and most interesting Report by His Majesty's Consul at Van on the manner in which that work was carried out by the Turkish authorities as inspected by him in his tour early in the winter.

Captain Tyrrell has, I venture to say, performed valuable work under most difficult circumstances, and his Report, which is evidently compiled in a spirit of real impartiality, is a most useful addition to our stock of knowledge concerning the state of affairs in the distressed districts.

I will bring to the notice of the Ottoman Government the special points in which Captain Tyrrell considers that their promises have not been fulfilled; on the whole, however, I think it is fair to assume that a considerable measure of assistance has been rendered by the authorities to the sufferers from last year's disturbances.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 22.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Mr. Townley.

(No. 54.)
Sir, *Van, December 27, 1904.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, in accordance with your telegrams of the 21st and 22nd October, I left Van on the 27th October, and, travelling through Gargar, went to Bitlis, to discuss with the American Missionaries there how I could best combine help with their relief work with the primary object of my journey, which

was to see how far the promises of the Turkish Government in regard to the resettling of the Armenians in Sassun and neighbouring districts had been carried out.

In the absence of accurate knowledge of the state of the Armenians, and of where relief was most urgently needed, I decided to tour through the districts in question at once. Meanwhile, grain and cloth were to be collected in Mush by the missionaries; and on my return from the mountains a missionary was to be in Mush with what funds were available, and distribution would be made on lines indicated by my Report of the state of the population.

I arrived in Mush on the 7th November, and found that the local authorities did not view my contemplated journey with favour. The Mutessarif was away, but Mir Alai Yavver Bey, who was acting for him, strongly dissuaded me from going, and assured me solemnly and emphatically that there was no distress whatever, that the Armenians were playing a deep game with the object of enlisting European sympathy, and that they would hide everything they had in the hope of persuading me that they were absolutely destitute.

Yavver Bey may have genuinely believed all this, and there is no doubt that this was the original intention of the revolutionists, and that the Armenian population, as a whole, took this line earlier in the year, as is shown in some of my earlier despatches from Mush. But allowing for this, it was still probable that, owing to the unsatisfactory nature of Turkish promises, especially where money is concerned, there was a certain amount of genuine distress, and that a large part of the population had not the necessary means to enable them to subsist during the long winter, when they are very much cut off from communication with the outside world. And I told Yavver Bey that I intended to satisfy myself by seeing things with my own eyes. He also could not say that any money had been given to the Talori villages for rebuilding, or that the subsistence allowance of 10 paras per head per diem had been continued beyond about the end of July (see my No. 41 of the 12th September), or that anything more had been done for the villages of the Mush Sandjak than was reported in my No. 12 of the 25th August. I accordingly left Mush on the 9th November. Owing to the lateness of the season I could not take horses or baggage, and had do the whole journey on foot. Under normal conditions it should still have been possible to take horses up and to transport grain and other necessities. But an abnormally wet autumn throughout the country had meant an early snowfall in the mountains, and the passes were blocked. Before leaving Mush I had collected what little transport was available, and given orders that all the grain, &c., in the hands of the missionaries was to be taken over to Semal as soon as the weather permitted. Semal, being over the first ridge, would have been more central than Mush as a centre of distribution, and the villagers would not have had to come so far to get what they needed. But the weather did not permit, and when I got back I found that nothing had been done. This was partly owing to the muleteers to make the journey and to risk losing their animals in the snowstorms which were then prevalent, and partly to the want of energy of the men I had left behind in Mush to see to the forwarding. They were Armenians, and perfectly useless as helpers, owing to fear. The Government showed no intention, so far as I could see, of interfering with them or of obstructing the work, but I found that unless I was on the spot to assure them by my presence nothing would be done.

For my trip to the mountains, the Local Government sent two officials with me. The first could not walk, and turned back on the second day; the other visited most of the villages and houses with me, saw that the people were really poor, and in need of relief, and reported accordingly when he returned to Mush. I afterwards learned that another official had been sent from Kulp to watch my movements in Talori and the other villages of the Genj Sandjak, but he arrived too late. As the winter had practically begun, and nothing could have been done in any case till the spring, the absence or presence of these officials did not much matter one way or the other. But I may say that they did not fulfil the conditions of my request to be accompanied by a responsible official who could act promptly on his own authority if I found anything urgent that required to be done. As it was, nothing could be done, however much it was required, so it made no difference; but the men who were to have accompanied me were simply very minor officials sent more as spies than anything else.

On the whole, the people of the districts which suffered in the spring were in a sad state. They had certainly subsisted up to date without actual starvation, and the men seemed strong and well fed, though it was otherwise with the women and children. As I expected, the subsistence allowance given by the Government had ceased long ago, but the people had continued to live. This was partly by selling

wood and wild plums in Mush, partly by begging there, and partly due to the fact that a certain amount of money had been saved, and stores of grain hidden in the earth, before the villages were destroyed. That they have more than appears to the eye, even of a careful searcher, I am convinced; but I could not find much in the houses, and I could only say that there was no visible means of subsistence for the winter, though there had been no starvation up to that time.

Generally, throughout the distressed districts, one can say that the people have cooking-pots, utensils, firewood, and shelter sufficient for the winter, while bedding, rugs, &c., are almost entirely wanting. In most of the houses were stores of turnips, dried or pickled walnuts, and wild plums. There seemed to be no other local produce to depend on, and what grain there was had been bought in Mush, or from neighbouring Kurds.

In the annexed Table will be found certain statistics regarding all the villages of the mountain which suffered from the operations of last spring, and I will make a few explanatory remarks on each section.

Of the six villages of Shattakh (Nos. 1 to 6), Tapik and Ersank were the poorest, their houses had only recently been rebuilt and were very damp, and there was, in consequence, some sickness in these two villages. Kop and Germaf are fairly well off, and each of them has a certain amount of cattle and sheep, which are quite wanting in the other Shattakh villages.

The two large Kavar villages, Shenik and Semal, are referred to later, in considering the allowances for rebuilding.

Shenik, even though it has all the refugees from Gelli Missur and Gelli Geneman, was comparatively well off. Semal, on the other hand, was in a miserable state, and, both as regards food and houses, its people were, perhaps, as badly off as those of any village throughout the distressed districts.

In these two villages, of 1,317 refugees who returned in July, eighty-seven have since died—i.e., about 6½ per cent. of the population—in four months, which is, I think, sufficient proof to the Turkish authorities, if proof were needed, that these villages are not deliberately hiding their prosperity.

These two villages have no live-stock at all.

New barracks have been built at Tapik and Semal.

The large village of Gelli Guzan, and its suburb Gelli Alian, are fairly well off as regards houses, and there are also a few sheep and cattle. But as a large barrack has been built in Gelli Guzan, the people had many complaints. Some 500 trees were cut for this, and taken without payment, by order of the Mutessarif, to make room for the barracks, seven houses were cleared away, and their inhabitants left without ground on which to build; also a total of 700 days' labour (probably forced) by various villagers on the barracks remains unpaid for.

In Gelli Guzan there seemed to be some one sick in nearly every house, but it was nothing of an infectious nature, so far as I could discover.

In all the above villages no crops were reaped this year, and nothing has been sown for next year.

The Sassun villages of Aghpi and Hitenk are comparatively well off, and a few fields have been sown.

The lands of Hitenk are largely owned by Kurds, who have found it to their own interest to assist the Armenians to resettle, and to help them with cattle for ploughing, seed for sowing, &c.

The three Sassun-Talori villages, Nos. 13 to 15, are very poor, and have practically nothing but their houses. A further reference to them is made later.

Next come the wards of Talori, as constituted by the Turks, Nos. 16 to 23. Here no money for rebuilding was given at all, and the people are proportionately poor. However, such houses as were rebuilt seemed dry and comfortable, and for local produce and climatical conditions Talori is perhaps more favourable as a winter resort than any of the other sections of the distressed districts. No cattle or sheep. The poorest villages in Talori were Gidank (No. 16) and Hakmank, and the extraordinary overcrowding in the former is apparent from column 5 of the annexed Table. But I think some of these people must have been sleeping in out-houses, or in neighbouring villages, though they denied it. This village had three quarters, Hekki, Gidank, and Verinkeni. The last named only consisted of two or three houses, which have disappeared to make room for the new barracks, the site of which is called Mergan by the Turks. The three houses which have been rebuilt are all in Gidank, so the people are all there now, but the Turks only recognize the name Hekki for the whole village.

Mezré and Hartkho (Nos. 24 and 25) are Talori, according to the Armenians, but under the Turkish subdivision have fallen to the Nahie of Khian. So, as Khian villages, they received money for rebuilding, and are comparatively well off. They have a good many fields sown for next year, and a certain amount of cattle and sheep, and they seem to have been able to make arrangements with neighbouring Kurds for borrowing ploughs and seed when it was necessary to sow.

Nos. 26 to 30, the five remaining Khian villages, are those of the Akcha Ser Valleys, which I was unable to visit this time. But I called the principal men of these villages into Talori to meet me, and ascertained from them the numbers present, their needs, &c. It seems that they are in much the same state as the rest, and only in Ardgunk and Helin have they been able to do some sowing for next year.

There is a new barrack at Akcha Ser (Armenian, Ishkyantsor).

There was a certain amount of sickness in some of the villages, nothing very serious or in the nature of an epidemic. It was probably due, in most cases, to a low diet, living in the damp, newly-built houses, and sleeping on damp mud floors without sufficient bedding.

As regards the houses rebuilt, the state varied considerably in the different villages. Some had practically all the houses rebuilt, others had only two or three. But by dint of overcrowding, several families occupying the same rooms, &c., every one had a roof of some sort over his head, and they appeared to have satisfied themselves that no more accommodation was required for the winter.

As the Government did not rebuild any houses, but gave money for rebuilding to the villagers, their present state in this particular depended very much upon themselves, and upon the work they chose to do.

Considering that wood is plentiful, that the houses are of very simple construction, and that, in the Mush villages at least tools, were supplied by the Government, I think that the money given for rebuilding was a fair enough allowance, although in many cases it was only half the amount promised, the second instalments being still due.

In the Table, under the heading "money given for rebuilding," are the figures supplied me by the Local Government, and these generally tally so nearly with what the villagers themselves told me, that I have taken them as they stood. Where any marked difference occurs in the statements of the villagers and of the officials it has been noted in the "remarks" column.

To decide upon the sums to be alloted for this purpose to the different villages, Armenian contractors were sent to make an estimate in conjunction with the inhabitants, and these estimates were accepted by the Government. I gather that about 3 meljidies (57 piastres = 10*s.* 4*d.*) is considered enough to build the ordinary village house. Of course this varies in different localities, according to facilities for obtaining wood, &c., but it seems to be a generally accepted estimate. It will be seen that the sums given work out to more than this average per house. In fact, in the case of some of the Khian villages, the Government appears to have been extravagantly, and quite inexplicably, generous. It will be noticed that the only village of those which have received money for rebuilding, whose allowance is markedly below this average, is Shenik, referred to below. So that, in the matter of rebuilding, the Turkish Government may claim to have done all that was incumbent on it, except in the following particulars:—

1. The eight wards of Talori have received no money for rebuilding at all. This was admitted by the Vali of Bitlis in a conversation I had with him on the 4th November, and I beg to repeat the remarks I made in my telegram and despatch of the 12th September regarding the telegram sent by the Vali of Bitlis to the Grand Vizier on the 15th August.

2. The village of Shenik has not received its full allowance, while Semal, a very large and needy village, has had nothing at all. This is partly the fault of the villagers themselves, who refused their allowances when they might have had them, under the circumstances explained in my No. 12 of the 25th August. But when they changed their minds the Mutessarif admitted their claims, only unfortunately it was then too late, as no money was left, and this 2,500 piastres given to Shenik seems to be all that the Government has been able to find for these two villages in the meantime.

3. The villagers of Gelli Missur and Gelli Genenan have not been allowed to return to their own villages (see my No. 6 of the 6th August), and their claim to money for building houses, wherever they might be settled, was also admitted by the Mutessarif. They are at present in Shenik.

In the above three cases the Local Government admits its liability, and until these moneys are given the Imperial Government cannot say that it has carried out all its promises.

4. The villages of Spaghank, Eghgard, and Tsorir have received no money for rebuilding because the Government claims that they did not suffer this year, but had been uninhabited for some time.

It is true that these villages were destroyed some years ago by Ali Pasha, but I am satisfied that the inhabitants had returned, and that they were destroyed again this year.

I think these villages ought also to receive money for rebuilding, but as the Government has never admitted their claim, this case is not quite on the same footing as the three previous ones.

There remain the villages of Kerdamak, Tatank, and Kistakh, in Sassun, which have received nothing, but I have satisfied myself that these villages were destroyed, or rendered uninhabitable by Kurdish oppression, at some time anterior to the operations of last spring, and that the Government are legally in the right in refusing to recognize them as within the scope of the resettlement.

Eliminating the above four cases, where the obligations of the Turkish Government have not yet been fulfilled, the sums given for rebuilding appear, on paper, to be generous enough. But against this it must be observed that a good deal of the money intended for rebuilding was necessarily spent by the villagers on food and clothing.

How far the Government has failed in its promises to feed the people it is difficult to say without knowing how far those promises went. The Government could hardly have contemplated feeding this population for an indefinite time, or even through the winter. But the subsistence allowance of 10 paras per head per diem does not seem to have been continued as long as might reasonably have been expected; and it was also calculated on the numbers who had reported themselves by the end of July, so that, as a matter of fact, many of the people coming in since have received no subsistence allowance at all.

The villages of the Genj Sandjak appear to have received nothing more than was shown in Table I of my No. 41 of the 12th September. The villages of the Mush Sandjak were rather more liberally dealt with, and, in addition to the subsistence allowance, small sums were given for tools and salt and soap, and every village was supplied with seed for sowing, 2 gots (about a bushel) of wheat, and half a got of millet per head of population. Unfortunately, oxen, ploughs, &c., were wanting, and most of the seed intended to be sown went the same way as part of the building money, *i.e.*, it was used for present necessities—and eaten.

Perhaps the simplest way of deciding to what extent the promises of the Government in regard to this resettlement have been carried out, is to compare the money actually spent, under every head, for the benefit of the people, with the sum supposed to have been provided.

I was given to understand, in July, that the Porte had set aside a sum of 500,000 piastres for this work. But, taking the various tables supplied me at different times by the local officials (and this makes no allowance for inevitable leakage as the money passes from hand to hand before reaching the villagers), I cannot make out that more than 225,000 piastres have been expended. I believe that the expenses of the five new barracks built in this region have come out of the sum nominally set aside for resettlement and relief. This is, of course, denied, but the fact remains that 275,000 piastres remain to be accounted for by the Porte.

On the other hand, the people themselves have not made the best of matters, and are in some degree to blame for the state in which they now find themselves. I have before alluded to the wrong-headedness of a section of the Armenians to their belief in foreign intervention, and to their determination to bring on such intervention, however much the ignorant villagers may suffer.

There is no doubt that the villagers were told, in the summer, to accept nothing from the Government, and not to admit that anything was being done for them, to deceive the Consuls, and, in short, to make the worst of everything. They were told that the Turks would be forced to rebuild their houses; that they would not be allowed to starve in the winter, &c. Some idea of this sort was doubtless at the bottom of the refusal of Shenik and Semal to take their building money when it was offered to them—a refusal which has cost them dear. In one village where I arrived unexpectedly, and saw the cattle, the villagers were afterwards asked why they had not hidden the cattle before the Consul's arrival. In the summer, when the Govern-

ment was giving wheat to certain villagers, the villagers complained to me that they had never been accustomed to eat wheat, that they did not, in fact, regard wheat as fit for human consumption, and they insisted on being supplied with millet instead. When, in November, I proposed to feed the people of these same villages on millet, as being cheaper than wheat, they made a great outcry, and demanded wheat. In July, the Chian villagers complained that Government had given them money in lieu of rations, which, under the circumstances, as I then understood them, seemed a reasonable complaint. In November, these same villagers begged me to give them money instead of grain, or any other form of relief, saying that they could buy all they wanted from neighbouring Kurdish villages, and cheaper than we could buy in Mush. This is true, but it is exactly opposite to the arguments they had produced in the summer.

Though the Government has not, in my opinion, done all that it should; though the villagers have suffered unnecessarily from petty tyranny; though their hard lot is rendered more difficult by irksome restrictions prohibiting them from going into Mush without passports, and only allowing a very small number to go there at a time with passports though they were, I believe, in many cases, made to work on the buildings of the new barracks without their remuneration; and though there may be something in their contention that they had no means of sowing the seed that was given them; still, I think that they have purposely not exerted themselves, nor made any provision for the winter until it was close upon them, in the belief that relief operations would be undertaken, and thus they would receive outside assistance as in 1896.

All this raises a very grave question about relief measures. These have a tendency to pauperize the people, who look upon them as a right, and who seem to think it is the duty of foreign Governments to provide for them. And in the present state of the country, and of the attitude, both of the Armenians and the Turks, it seems as if such relief measures would be required at regularly recurring intervals—at least, there is no guarantee that all this will not happen again, when the money now spent in relief will all be wasted.

However, whatever the future may be, and whatever may happen in the future, the only fact which I had to consider at the time was that there was a large population rendered homeless by the operations of the spring, resettled under certain promises from the Turkish Government, and with no visible means of subsistence for the winter.

As before explained, there are houses enough to shelter the people. Fuel is also abundant. Bedding was deficient, and the women were often in rags, and the children nearly naked. But this is not quite so bad as it at first seems to the European eye, for these people live in a room without windows, with a large fire, and they have no reason to go out of doors in winter so long as there is something to eat in the house. It is their normal life, and even in villages which have not suffered, the women and children will be found in much the same state. Provided they have a good roof over their heads and lots of firewood clothes do not matter much. The immediate necessity was food. From numerous inquiries and conversations, I concluded that the Government allowance of 10 paras per head per diem was a fair one, and that it would suffice to keep the people alive, as far as food alone was concerned. I will now explain the calculation on which I based my telegram of the 24th November, in which I said that 1,750*l.* were required:—

Reckoning 10 paras per head per diem for five months (15th November to 15th April, which is, I think, a fair allowance for the winter, as 150 days (giving another 30 for carriage, works out to 30 piastres, or 2 medjidies, per week. Taking 6 medjidies to the L., it will be seen that L1 will, roughly, feed three persons for the whole winter.

There were 7,216 people present, and the missionaries had 1,000 sets of wheat in hand in Mush. Taking 2 sets as sufficient for one man for a month—a liberal allowance—this wheat would feed 500 men through the winter. There then remain 6,716 to be provided for, at the rate of three to the L., whence 2,238*l.* was required; about 600*l.* was in the hands of Dr. Underwood and myself, which left a balance of 1,750*l.* required.

If proper relief measures could have been undertaken, and if there were sufficient Europeans to make the distributions in the various villages, and to discriminate between those who were fairly well off and those who were absolutely in want, I think that the sum I have stated as a minimum would be found to be more than sufficient; but unfortunately such a distribution was impossible. As explained in my telegram

of the 20th November, the season was too far advanced for transport to cross the mountains, and the villages were cut off by snow, except to pedestrians. The only thing we could do was to issue wheat to the nearer villages and give money to the more remote ones, in proportion to the number of souls in each village, trusting to the people to distribute it among themselves according to their needs. Clothing, felts, and shoes which were in hand, were also distributed as far as they would go.

As you are aware, the money I asked for was not forthcoming at the time, and I had to leave Mush before any more was received.

During the time that I remained in Mush no difficulties were placed by the authorities in the way of the villagers coming in to receive help, or in the distribution of relief, and when I left Dr. Underwood remained to distribute any money that the missionaries might receive. The Mutessarif of Mush promised me that Dr. Underwood would not be interfered with, nor find any difficulty after I had left, and I hope that nothing may occur to prevent the efforts which we have made from effecting their object of keeping the whole population alive through the winter.

The limitations of the sum that I asked for should, however, be realized. It is simply to feed the people through the winter. In the spring, cattle, sheep, seed for sowing, sloughs, and oxen will be needed if the people are to continue to live in these villages, and relief operations will then have to be undertaken in a more methodical manner, if it is decided that it is worth while.

Also, the 1,750*l.* I asked for is for the villages of the mountains only—those given in the annexed Table. It takes no account of the villages of the Mush plain, in some of which there is genuine distress, though they did not suffer in the same degree as those which were the scene of the operations in the spring. Nor does it consider certain villages of Sassun which have suffered from Kurdish tyranny during the last few years. It is significant that the want in the villages of the plain is chiefly due to the fact that they did not sow their usual amount of crops in the autumn of 1902. They were either told to adopt this course by the revolutionists, or, being revolutionists themselves, they knew what was coming, and did not think it worth while to sow.

I have gone fully into the matter of the Government's unfulfilled promises. While I was at Mush I was informed from time to time of promises made by the Grand Vizier to instruct the Vali to render aid in relief measures, and even to send money himself. In my opinion the Turks have done all they intend to do for the people of Sassun and surrounding districts, and will not do any more except under pressure. This was the impression which every conversation on the subject with local officials gave me. They had no money for it themselves, and they certainly expected none from Constantinople.

After my return to Mush I received a complaint from the inhabitants of Vidank (No. 16) that their three houses had again been destroyed by the soldiers of the neighbouring barracks of Mergan, and that they were once more homeless. Shortly afterwards the people of Hartik made the same complaint. I had stayed in the Mergan barracks, and noticed that the soldiers there were almost in a state of mutiny. They were nearly as badly off for clothes and rations as the people of the villages; the barracks were not fit to live in for the winter, there being no glass to the windows, no stoves, the doors being flimsy, and the mud walls already crumbling under the heavy autumn rains. It did not therefore surprise me to hear that the soldiers had pulled down the houses of the nearest villages to take beams and props for the barracks, and all they could find for themselves. The Mutessarif and Ferik both accepted the villagers' tale as true, agreed that it was a most disgraceful state of things, said that these were not the intentions of the Government, but could do nothing except promise to send orders that these practices were to cease. I felt that nothing could be done. The battalion was isolated for the winter and could not be punished in any way for what the soldiers had done, while relief or a change of scene would have been the one thing they all desired. If I had gone up there I could not have rebuilt the houses, nor persuaded the people who had scattered themselves in other villages to come back to the vicinity of the barracks and give the soldiers a chance of doing it again.

These things will happen as long as the Turkish Government remains what it is, and by neglecting the most elementary duties towards its own soldiers forces them to live as best they can, to the detriment of the people among whom they are quartered.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 22.

VARIOUS Details regarding the Resettlement of Armenian Villages in Sassun and Neighbouring Districts.

	Village.	Number of People present, November 1904.	Totals.	Number of Houses Destroyed.	Number of Houses Rebuilt.	Average Number of Persons per House now.	Money given by Government for Rebuilding. Piastres.	Money given by Government for Rebuilding. Equivalent in £ s. d.	Average per House to be Rebuilt. Piastres.	Average per House to be Rebuilt. Equivalent in £ s. d.	Remarks.
SANDJAK OF MUSH.											
Shattakh	1. Tapik (Armenian portion)	205		22	12	17	1,673	15 4 2	76	0 13 10	
	2. Ersank	106		11	5	21	1,000	9 1 10	90	0 16 4	
	3. Kop, with Zelnik	416		50	34	12	4,093	37 4 2	82	0 14 11	
	4. Germaf	331		39	29	12	2,772½	25 4 1	71	0 12 11	
	5. Shushlamerg	221		29	24	9	1,600	14 10 11	55	0 10 0	
	6. Keghashen	239		25	20	12	2,107½	19 3 2	84	0 15 3	
	Total of 6 villages of Shattakh ..	..	1,518								
Kavar and Andok ..	7. Shenik	557		70	41	19	2,500	22 14 6	36	0 6 6	
	8. Gelli Missur and Gelli Geneman ..	204		33	..		..	..	..	..	
	9. Semal, with Deshtok	711		84	30	24	..	..	..	..	
	10. Gelli Guzan, with Gelli Alian	1,444		158	95*	11	14,543	132 4 2	92	0 16 9	* And 39 houses not destroyed.
	Total of Andok villages	..	2,916								
Sassun	11. Aghpi	620		93	50	12	6,362	58 0 4	68	0 12 4	
	12. Hitenk	380		35	35	11	2,459½	22 7 2	70	0 12 9	
Talori, but placed by the Turks in the Caza of Sassun	13. Spaghank	70		18	4	18	..	..	..	..	
	14. Eghard	60		11	1†	20	..	..	..	..	† And 3 houses not destroyed.
	15. Tsorir	22		6	..		..	..	..	..	
	Total of five Sassun villages of Mush Sandjak	..	1,152								

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SANDJAK OF GENJ.											
Talori	16. Talori (Hekki, Gidank, and Verinkein) ..	152		38	3	50	No money for rebuilding given to Talori.				‡ And 3 houses not destroyed.
	17. Pourkh	71		16	4	18					§ „ 4 house „
	18. Tovalink	65		17	6‡	7					‖ „ 4 houses „
	19. Hakmank	56		16	3§	14					
	20. Hologhink	148		38	11‖	10					
	21. Holovit, with Hosner and Karavank ..	80		15	5	16					
	22. Havgunk	45		10	2	15	..	..			15 people living in Kerdamank and neighbouring Sasun villages.
	23. Hartik, with Hosnud	118		23	7¶	15					¶ And 1 house not destroyed
	Total of 8 wards of Talori	..	735								
Talori, but placed by the Turks in the Khiyan Nahie of the Caza of Kulp	24. Mezre	100		12	11	9	4,104	37 6 2	342	3 2 2	
	25. Harikho, with Korakho	65		8	5	13	2,725	24 15 5	340	3 1 10	
Akcha Ser valleys, Khiyan Nahie ..	26. Akcha-Ser (Ishkyantsor)	350		65	15	23	5,080	55 5 5	91	0 17 1	
	27. Sevit	70		12	4	18	1,965	17 17 3	164	1 9 10	
	28. Guzuak	200		40	10	20	1,715½	15 11 11	43	0 7 10	The inhabitants say that they have only received about half these sums.
	29. Ardgunk	220		40	20	11	4,550	41 7 3	114	1 0 9	
	30. Helin	120		20	6	20	1,770	16 1 10	68	0 12 4	
	Total of Khiyan villages	..	1,125								
	Total of population	..	7,446				62,040	564 0 0	Given by Government towards rebuilding.		

No. 23.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Townley.

(No. 53.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 17, 1905.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 88 of the 7th instant, reporting that you had been informed by the Grand Vizier that the new Vali of Kharput was to proceed to his post on that day.

I have learnt with satisfaction of the language used by his Highness to Abdul Rahman Fehmi previous to his departure.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 24.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Townley.

(No. 54.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 17, 1905.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 91 of the 7th instant, reporting a conversation with the Grand Vizier relative to the recent murders at Diarbekir and the action of the local authorities.

I approve your language on this occasion.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 25.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 20.)

(No. 105.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February 13, 1905.*

EARLY in November last Arsen Vartabed, Catholicos Vekile of Akhtamar, and his secretary, were murdered at Hakkavank. Owing to Captain Tyrrell's absence from Van on special service at Moush, it was not at the time possible to obtain a reliable account of the incident, but it was generally believed that the crime had some connection with the Narek affair, which occurred a short time previously.

The accompanying copy of a despatch from Captain Tyrrell will show your Lordship that that energetic officer visited the Monastery of Hakkavank on his way back to Van from Moush, for the purpose of investigating the facts of the murder.

As your Lordship will perceive from a perusal of his Report, Captain Tyrrell has satisfied himself that Arsen Vartabed met his death at the hands of Armenian revolutionists under a man named Ishkhan, and that he was murdered because he refused to assist the revolutionary movement.

I informed the Grand Vizier to-day of the substance of Captain Tyrrell's Report, and impressed upon his Highness that it was to be regretted that the local authorities had taken no steps to arrest and punish the perpetrators of the outrage, since a bad impression would very naturally be created in the country when it was seen that the Turkish authorities did not seek to chastise the murderers of an Armenian Prelate who had lost his life on account of his loyalty to the Ottoman Government.

Fevzi Pasha took note of Ishkhan's name, and promised that justice should be done.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure in No. 25.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Mr. Townley.

(No. 2.)

Sir, *Van, January 10, 1905.*

AS the murder of Arsen Vartabed, Catholicos Vekile of Akhtamar, was an event of some local importance, I have the honour to send you details of the occurrence now, although it took place as far back as the beginning of November last. Shortly after I had left Van for Moush and Sasun I was informed of the event by telegram, and was inclined to attribute it to the Kurdish partisans of the outlaw, Abdul Ghafur, who was wanted by the Government for his participation in the Narek affair, as Arsen Vartabed had been very energetic and fearless in exposing the conduct of those implicated, and in trying to get the offenders punished. However, there was always the chance of the murder having been committed by revolutionists, with whom the late Prelate was not on good terms.

On my way back to Van I visited the scene of the murder, the monastery at Hakkavank, and learned the following details from the eye-witnesses:—

One evening, at about 10 P.M., about half-a-dozen armed revolutionists climbed over the outer wall of the monastery, made the zaptieh a prisoner and took his rifle, and collecting all the inmates, shut them up in one room. This band was headed by a well-known revolutionist called Ishkhan, who explained why he had come, and enumerated the counts against Arsen Vartabed. He behaved in a very overbearing manner, and struck one of the monks who had contradicted some of his assertions. Finally the revolutionists told Arsen Vartabed to come outside, with his secretary, as they had an account to settle with him, and the band, with its two prisoners, left the monastery, telling the rest of the inmates not to leave the room in which they had been collected until the morning, or they would be killed.

Next morning the bodies of Arsen Vartabed and his secretary were found in a grove on the shore of the lake, about a quarter of a mile from the monastery. The former had been stabbed in the stomach, the latter had about thirty dagger-wounds in his head and back. The secretary had in former years been a revolutionist, and had come here from Persia as such. But he had left them, and was now supposed to be a Government informer; hence the mutilation of his body. Besides the general accusation that Arsen Vartabed did not assist the revolutionary cause, he was particularly arraigned before Ishkhan for having refused to store wheat on the Island of Akhtamar for the use of the revolutionists, and for having even removed what wheat was stored there, so as to make it impossible for them to take shelter on the island, as they had done in August last; also for having affixed his seal to a false report of the Narek affair, which was said to have been sent to Constantinople by the Vali, exonerating the local officials. I do not think there were any grounds for the last accusation. Arsen's entire conduct after the Narek affair gives the lie to it, and I have no reason to believe that such a report was ever sent, still less with the Vartabed's seal and sanction, and it is said that the murderers themselves now admit that they were mistaken on this point.

Of course there are now numerous stories of how Arsen Vartabed abused his position to enrich himself at the expense of the Church and of the Armenian people, of his immorality and tyranny, &c., and many Armenians are not afraid to justify this brutal murder on these grounds. The charges may be true: ninety-nine out of a hundred of Arsen's compatriots would do the same in his place. But he was an unusually capable and intelligent man, and useful because he had the ear of the local Government, and so could get more done than most of the Armenian notables. His real crime was that he recognized that the revolutionists are doing far more harm than good, and that he would have nothing to do with them.

This brutal and cowardly murder of a priest, and the mutilation of the body of his secretary, show the temper of the revolutionists, the lengths to which they are prepared to go in terrorizing the people, and the rights of punishment which they arrogate to themselves. I wonder if the philanthropists in Europe who contribute to their funds realize the kind of crimes which they may be helping to commit?

Above all, one is struck by the helpless and callous attitude of the Government, which has made no sort of effort to apprehend the murderers, or to prevent them from thus dispensing justice in their own fashion, should they deem it necessary to their cause to make another example.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 26.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 20.)

(No. 106.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February 13, 1905.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 161 of the 29th November, 1904, upon the subject of the nature of the punishment to be inflicted on Lutfi Bey in connection with the Narek incident, and to previous despatches which I have had the honour to address to your Lordship on the same subject, I beg to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, giving an exhaustive account of the state of things at Narek when he visited that place on his way back to Van from Mush.

I spoke to the Grand Vizier to-day about this incident, and told him that I had received a satisfactory report of what had been done from Captain Tyrrell. I said that it would appear that all that could be done for the present for the unfortunate villagers had been done, and I expressed a hope that the further buildings destroyed would be reconstructed as soon as the weather permitted.

His Highness replied that his attention had recently been called by the Ottoman Embassy in London to a letter published in the London papers on this subject, from an American missionary at Van, in which the writer, while recognizing the good work done by the Vali, had expressed a hope similar to that to which I had just given utterance. He said that he had at once telegraphed to the Vali, and had told him that he would be held responsible for the proper carrying out of the work of reconstruction as soon as the season permitted. The Vali had replied that all arrangements had been made for putting the work in hand in April next.

I then turned to that portion of Captain Tyrrell's despatch which deals with the amount of punishment inflicted upon the two guilty officials, Lutfi Bey and Halil Effendi. I said that Captain Tyrrell reported that Lutfi Bey had merely been transferred to Khoshab, and that Halil Effendi, after being kept under arrest for a few days, had been liberated and was now once more at Van in the full enjoyment of his rank and salary. I said that such lenient treatment of officials who had betrayed their trust could not fail to have a very bad effect. I was loath to press for the punishment of Lutfi Bey, because he had shown himself a competent and zealous official up to the incident in question, but I could not conceal from his Highness that I considered it highly desirable that he should be transferred to some other vilayet, whilst Halil Effendi had certainly deserved more condine punishment than had been meted out to him.

Ferid Pasha promised me upon his word of honour that Lutfi Bey should be transferred, and that he would telegraph to the Vali of Van to ask why Halil Effendi had been so leniently dealt with.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Mr. Townley.

(No. 1.)

Sir, *Van, January 6, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to return herewith Drogmanat Memorandum No. 381 of the 15th November, 1904.

On my way back from Mush I visited Narek to see how things had been going there, and I was favourably impressed by what I saw.

All the people (about 1,000) are back in the village. Though only 32 rooms, out of 108 destroyed, have been rebuilt, it must be remembered that the exceptionally heavy rains of the autumn and the early winter, made it impossible to do much in this line, and the people have sufficient to house them for the winter. Of the 76 rooms not yet rebuilt, 26 belong to the monastery, and are not needed till the spring. 400 chaps of wheat (about 900 bushels) were taken from neighbouring Kurdish villages and given to Narek as compensation for what had been removed; and another 300 chaps (about 675 bushels) were provided on loan from the Government anbar for the subsistence of the villagers. These 300 chaps will have to be repaid.

Government gave 10,000 piastres (about 91*l.*) compensation for bedding, rugs, furniture, and utensils lost—a sum which, though probably not covering the actual loss—is, perhaps, as much as could reasonably be expected in this country.

Four hundred trees, and the workmen necessary for rebuilding, were also supplied at Government expense.

The village was well stocked with cattle, sheep, poultry, and other necessities; and there remained only sixteen head of cattle and fifty-four sheep to be made good. The Kaimakam was about to pay the value of these fifty-four sheep.

If the intentions expressed in the Vali's telegram which is the subject of the inclosed Memorandum, as to rebuilding in the spring, are carried out, I do not think there will be any grounds of complaint as to the steps taken by the Local Government to re-establish the villagers after the occurrence of last October.

Some property of the American Mission was destroyed, with the room in which they held a village-school, and the personal effects of their teacher were also looted. For this, a claim of 1,112 piastres (about 10*l.*) has been made. So far, 300 piastres (2*l.* 15*s.*) have been offered in settlement of the claim, and refused. Reverting to my Nos. 49 and 51, of 1904, on the subject of the Narek incident, I mentioned the three principal offenders, and the sense of insecurity experienced by the people as long as they remained unpunished.

The murderer Abdul Ghafur remained at large till the beginning of December. The Government was afraid to press the matter of his pursuit and capture too energetically, and though the Vali of Bitlis, the Mutessarif of Mush, and other local officials, were warned that he was a fugitive from Justice, he wandered in the Kurdish districts south of the Lake, and was received by the Sheikh of Khizan, in the Bitlis Vilayet. This Sheikh gave him a safe-conduct back to Vostan, and actually requested the Government not to interfere with him, as he wished to collect his goods and chattels with a view to removing his household from Kiavash to the vicinity of the Sheikh. About this time, Zevdet Bey, son of the Vali of Van, arrived in Vostan as acting Kaimakam. He is young, and progressive in his ideas, at present, and set himself energetically to work to put the Narek matter to rights, and to capture Abdul Ghafur, who was accordingly taken by zaptiehs in the village of Takhmanis, close to Narek. He showed fight, and was wounded, and Zevdet Bey had him conveyed to the prison in Vostan, where he committed suicide. This is the best termination of his part of the affair. If he had recovered, and been brought to trial, it is very doubtful if he would have been punished. There is not much doubt that his happy despatch in prison was contrived, to save further embarrassment.

I regret to say that the other two culprits, the Kaimakam Lutfi Bey, and the Yuzbashi of Gendarmerie, Halil Effendi, have not been punished. The former has simply been transferred to Khoshab (Hamidié), whither he was allowed to go immediately I had left Van (see my No. 51). The Vali repeats his assurances that he will be tried if any evidence is forthcoming against him. But the Government considers it has done its duty in re-settling the people; and there is no hope of further measures tending to discourage officials and Kurds from bringing about similar incidents.

The simplest way of dealing with Lutfi Bey, against whom I know no evidence will ever be produced, is to have him transferred by an order from Constantinople, to another vilayet. This will save the face of the Government in the eyes of the Mussulmans, and it will have a good effect here, where it will be known that his behaviour in the Narek incident was the real reason of his transfer to another sphere of usefulness. I would humbly beg you to consider whether such a transfer could not be arranged.

In the telegram to the Grand Vizier under review, the Vali states that Halil Effendi, among others, had been already arrested and imprisoned. He was put under arrest, at first, and the Vali and Ferik promised me he should be tried by court-martial, as mentioned in my No. 49. But nothing was done in fulfilment of this promise, and the man is now in Van, in enjoyment of his rank and pay, as well as complete liberty.

I cannot consider the Narek incident closed until the few points which I have mentioned above are attended to, although the Government has done well enough towards the village itself.

Perhaps the most pleasing feature in the present situation is the confidence of the villagers in the new Kaimakam, Zevdet Bey.

There remains to be noted the conduct of Husni Bey, the Tabur Aghassi of Gendarmerie who was sent to Vostan as acting Kaimakam after the affair. It appears

that soon after my departure he began to set the imprisoned Kurds free, to stop the collecting of stolen property in the Kurdish villages, and to imprison the inhabitants of Narek who complained. In fact he did nothing that he was there to do, and only thought of taking bribes, and of making hay while the sun shone. Luckily his time in power was not very long, and everything was changed, as before stated, on the arrival of Jevdet Bey, who reported Husni Bey's conduct, with the result that the latter was, for a time, under arrest, and deprived of his functions of Tahsr Aghassi.

Unfortunately a public thrashing which he received, unofficially, was considered to condone his offences, and he has therefore been re-instated. Though this has no direct bearing on the Narek affair, I wish to record Husni Bey's conduct for future reference, as it may well be that he will be selected again for some such employment as that for which he has just shown his signal unfitness.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 27.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 20.)

(No. 117.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February 14, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 93 of the 7th instant, I have the honour to report that I caused the points mentioned in Captain Tyrrell's despatch No. 45 of the 27th December, where he considered that the Turkish authorities had fallen short of their engagements as to the resettlement of the Armenian inhabitants of the Mush and Talori districts, to be brought to the notice of the Grand Vizier. It was on that occasion made clear to his Highness that Captain Tyrrell had reported favourably on the whole on the work that had been done.

Ferid Pasha told me yesterday that he had telegraphed the substance of my communication to the Vali of Bitlis, who had replied that Captain Tyrrell must have been misinformed in certain particulars, but that orders had been sent to Mush and Genj to dispatch competent officials to the spot to report, to make good any wrongs, to pay for the houses that had been pulled down, to supply materials for the barracks, to pay the money due to villagers whose work had not been remunerated, and to furnish the funds promised to the villages that had not received pecuniary assistance for the reconstruction of their houses.

His Highness said that he had again telegraphed to the Vali that the report by Captain Tyrrell was not written in a fault-finding spirit, and that the abuses complained of might easily be due to the action of irresponsible persons.

I have also the honour to inclose a copy of a further report from Captain Tyrrell upon a subject which is dealt with in my despatch No. 933 of the 6th December, 1904, to your Lordship.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure in No. 27.

Captain Tyrrell to Mr. Townley.

(No. 5.)

Sir, *Van, January 18, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 17th December, 1904, in which you desire my remarks on the statement of the Mutessarif of Mush, embodied in the above despatch.

1. The table which I forwarded with my No. 54 of the 27th December, 1904, shows a sum of 39,130½ piastres spent on the repair of houses in the villages of the Sanjak of Mush. To this must be added 1,956½ piastres expended on rebuilding the Kurdish portion of the village of Tapik. Thus, according to my information, 41,087 piastres have been spent on rebuilding in the Sanjak, as against the Mutessarif's statement of 51,286½ piastres up to the 16th November. It is possible that some moneys were given after the date on which the figures were supplied to

me, but I did not hear of it, although I remained in Mush until the 14th December, and the official figures which I gave agreed very closely with what the villagers themselves told me. I am not disposed, however, to quarrel with the Mutessarif's estimate, as I have always found his statements reliable, and that his figures corresponded, as closely as could be expected, to facts.

2. It was not easy to arrive at the sums disbursed for the maintenance of the inhabitants, as their maintenance was largely provided for in kind—grain for eating and seed for sowing. And to make an exact calculation one would have to know the fluctuations in the price of grain during the period over which it was supplied, and at what prices the authorities obtained it. I knew the amount supplied, and taking an average price, and including moneys given under every head except rebuilding, such as for salt and soap, for tools, for seed, for food, I arrived at a total, for the villages of the Mush Sanjak, of 150,200 piastres. This agrees very closely with the Mutessarif's statement that three-quarters of the 210,000 piastres required for maintenance had already been spent.

3. I cannot agree that there are no cases of absolute destitution.

4. In my No. 54, above mentioned, I noted the cases of overcrowding, but whether that is the worst hardship to which the people are exposed is a question.

5. It is hardly worth commenting on the truism that the Municipality cannot feed even a portion of the people. No one ever supposed or pretended that it could. The Municipality cannot feed the poor and destitute in Mush itself, much less the 7,000 odd inhabitants of the mountain districts; while the Government cannot feed and clothe the soldiers, much less the Armenians. Since July I have repeatedly pointed out that the money must be supplied through Constantinople.

6. I agree that it would be well to devote part of the sum granted to cover the expenses of installation to supplying cereals or other aid to those most in need of it. In my No. 54 I showed that the estimates on which this sum was based were liberal. But the money has to be received first, and according to the Mutessarif's statement there are still 113,022 piastres due on this count.

7. I can quite believe that the Vali of Bitlis has not yet remitted the balance of any sum which may be due from him.

8. I shall be interested to know what the Mutessarif of Genj has to say in regard to the rebuilding of Talori villages.

I may take this opportunity to say that this week I have had letters from Dr. Underwood, whom I had left behind in Mush to continue the distribution, and from Mr. Cole, the American missionary in Bitlis, through whom the money for relief is sent. Dr. Underwood appears to have encountered no difficulties up to the end of December, and had provided relief on the scale which we had deemed to be sufficient for all the population up to the end of January, with the exception of a few of the villages of Shatakh. Mr. Cole announces that about 1,100*l.* has been received since my departure from Mush.

I have, &c.

(Signed) E. G. TYRRELL,

His Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van.

No. 28.

"Friends of Armenia" to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 22.)

My Lord, 47, *Victoria Street, Westminster, February 20, 1905.*

WE beg respectfully to thank you for your letter of the 8th instant, wherein you point out that there are now four Consuls and Vice-Consuls in certain districts of Asiatic Turkey, which you have hitherto considered to be sufficient, and that those officers "have done much to prevent and alleviate suffering."

It is because we do so entirely concur in that view that we have ventured to lay before your Lordship the earnest prayer of the resident missionaries, to which we have joined our own, that the number of Consuls may be increased, and by this means something more may be done in fulfilment of the duty which we long since undertook, to watch over and protect the Christian races of that distracted country.

There is little doubt that many of the young men of the Armenian race, driven by despair to reckless revolutionary attempts, lead the Turkish Government to repressive

measures of brutal severity, under which old men, women, and children become the helpless victims.

The lawless Kurdish tribes are permitted, if not encouraged, by the Turkish Government to commit robbery, murder, and every description of outrage on the unarmed peasants, and it is because we believe that the four British officials mentioned by your Lordship are most useful in restraining those evils that we desire their encouragement and an increase in their number. If at least four more were added to those already appointed, their restraining influence would be greatly strengthened, and more would be done to lighten that load of misery which now lies so heavily on those persecuted and more than decimated Christian peoples.

We beg to thank your Lordship for the promise that you "will carefully watch the course of events during the coming spring, and will make every effort to prevent any abuse of their power by the local authorities and troops."

We take the liberty, however, again to remark that this can only be effectively accomplished by the appointment of a larger number of British Representatives.

On behalf of the Committee of the "Friends of Armenia,"

(Signed) LUCY C. F. CAVENDISH, *President.*
E. W. BROOKS, *Chairman of Committee.*

No. 29.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 128.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February 21, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 91 of the 7th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith, a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Diarbekir, relating to the events consequent on the murder of two Armenians at Diarbekir, on the 16th November last.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 29.

Consul Young to Mr. Townley.

(No. 3.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, February 6, 1905.*

REFERRING to my despatches Nos. 32 and 34 of the 20th and 23rd last respectively, on the subject of the murder of two Armenians at Diarbekir, on the 16th November, 1904, I have the honour to report that the two Kurds Aleko and Fakhi Yousef, who arrived here under arrest, on the 20th January, were brought before the Mustantik on the 30th and 31st January, and both of them denied all knowledge of the murder.

On the following day, however, the 1st February, the Vali of Diarbekir took the unusual step of summoning one of them (Aleko) to the Government Konak, where he was again examined (in a room adjoining His Excellency's), four of the Armenian prisoners being also present. On this occasion, regardless of his statement before the Mustantik on the previous day, Aleko confessed the murder, but added that he had been bribed 2*l.* to do the deed by one of the Armenians now present (and, it is said, indicated to him by the Vali's Aide-de-camp). Fakhi Yousef has subsequently also withdrawn the statement made by him before the Mustantik, and has confessed his share in the crime—adding, however, like his companion that he was aided and abetted by Armenians.

This is the second occasion on which Nazim Pasha, besides having twice summoned the prisoners to his presence, has personally intervened in a matter which would seem to be one for the Courts alone—a line of action which unfortunately lends colour to a theory (generally accepted here), that His Excellency must have personal reasons for desiring the investigation of the crime to take a partienlar course.

Whether or not Nazim Pasha (and others referred to in my despatch No. 33 of the 21st December), have accepted bribes in this matter, I would not venture to offer an opinion, for it would almost certainly be impossible to produce proof of the statements which are current. But it would seem at least probable that his Excellency has some strong motive for the pains he has taken to shield Hamdullah Bey (the supposed instigator of the crime), and to guide suspicion to another quarter, to say nothing of a disingenuous attitude throughout which has been calculated to shake the confidence of his sincerest well wishers in his fitness to administer a great province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. WILKIE YOUNG.

Inclosure 2 in No. 29.

Chavrashian Murder: a Summary of Principal Incidents connected with, up to February 9, 1905.

AS it is now nearly three months since the double murder was committed, and as nine presumably innocent persons are still in prison (besides the two culprits who have confessed), the moment is perhaps not opportune for a brief recapitulation—of incidents which have been previously reported in various despatches from the 20th December, 1904, to the 9th February, 1905.

On the 19th November last, two Armenians were found murdered and general suspicion fell upon two Kurds, Aleko and Fakhi, who are dependants of Hamdullah Bey the known enemy of the murdered man. No attempt was made, however, to arrest these persons who returned to their village. On the contrary the Vali, disregarding the suggestion of the police, gave orders to "look for the murderers in the city." As a result ten Armenians were arrested, two of whom—after being tortured in the presence of the Vali's Aide-de-camp and nephew—made statements before the Vali himself incriminating their companions. Their statements were subsequently retracted in the presence of the Vali, and of the French and British Vice-Consuls.

On the 12th December, it became notorious that the two Kurds (referred to above), viz., Aleko and Fakhi Yousef, had committed the crime, and had openly boasted of it. Nevertheless it was not till seven weeks later (the 29th January)—and then only in consequence of pressure from Constantinople—that these two men were brought to Diarbekir under arrest. Hamdullah Bey, their Chief, and reported instigator of the crime, is still at liberty, and has recently been given Government employment.

Reference Nos. 32, 33, 34 of December, 1904.
Reference No. 1, the 20th January, 1905.
Reference No. 3, the 9th February, 1905.

The following are now (the 9th February) in prison in connection with the Chavrashian murders:—

Name	Remarks.
(1.) Jacob Asturian	A photographer.
(2.) Ahednak, of Mandeljian ..	"
(3.) Dikran Bozadjian ..	"
(4.) Kecheje Jacob	Maker of pack saddles.
(5.) Krikchus	A barber, and brother-in-law of (4).
(6.) Nishan	A mad boy.
(7.) Arlin	A deaf mute, vegetable gardener.
(8.) Shukri	A land-owner, uncle of (6).
(9.) Achmed Eddjour	A farmer, a Moslem.
(10.) Aleko	The two Kurds who have confessed the murder, and are now supposed to have been acting under the orders of their Chief, Hamdullah Bey.
(11.) Fakhi Yousef ..	

(1)–(8) are Christians of various denominations.

N.B.—(1) and (5) were tortured in order to elicit statements incriminating (1), (2), and (3).

(6) and (7) were arrested later, but they seem unlikely accomplices, one being mad and the other stone deaf.

(8) was arrested after the murder at the village of Merkhand, and can prove that he had not been in Diarbekir for three months.

No. 30.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Townley.

(No. 57.)

Foreign Office, February 27, 1905.

Sir,

I HAVE received your despatch No. 105 of the 13th instant reporting a conversation with the Grand Vizier relative to the murder of Arsen Vartabed, Catholicos Vekile of Aklitamar.

I approve your language to Fehrid Pasha on this occasion.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 31.

Mr. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 134.)

Constantinople, February 28, 1905.

My Lord,

WITH reference to Sir Nicholas O'Conor's despatch No. 657 of the 9th October, 1903, I have the honour to forward herewith, to your Lordship, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting a correspondence which has recently passed between him and Jafer Agha, Chief of the Abdin section of the Shekaks.

As your Lordship will observe, Captain Tyrrell would like to learn whether his answer to Jafer Agha meets with your approval.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WALTER TOWNLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 31.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Mr. Townley.

(No. 7.)

Van, February 4, 1905.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inclose copies of a correspondence which has recently taken place between me and Jafer Agha, Chief of the Abdin section of the Shekaks.

This man is one of the brigands who infest the frontier, and who render the direct road from Van into Persia (that through Bashkala and Dilman, across the Salmas Plain) useless as a means of communication.

I made his acquaintance in the winter of 1902, when I travelled in Persia. Details concerning him and his tribe are given in my No. 30 of the 1st September, 1903.

It would seem that he has at length fallen out with the Persian Government, and that, after the manner of his kind, he now wishes to change masters, and cross the frontier. But I have little information beyond what is contained in his letters. The Vali here is naturally unfavourable to his aspirations, saying that there are already as many bad men and brigands in the Van Vilayet as he can do with. He has told the Porte that he declines to have him in this vilayet, and suggested that he and his men should be sent to some place in the interior, such as Mardin. It is possible that the influence of the Mushir at Erzinjan may be thrown into the scale against the Vali, as he does not like to lose any opportunity of enrolling Hamidie.

I understand that Jafer Agha's men made a good fight against the troops of the Persian Government, and it is said that they even captured the two guns which were sent against them. His rival and enemy, Musto, Chief of the Kerdar section (See my No. 30 of the 1st September, 1903), is at present in possession of Jafer's fortress at Chahri. This does not improve matters, as far as the tranquillity of the frontier is concerned, one being as big a brigand as the other.

These facts and the correspondence are, I think, only interesting as part of the record of Kurdish affairs on the frontier, and as showing the exaggerated notion of their own importance possessed by these petty chieftains, and how they think that foreign Powers may be induced to take sides in their quarrels, for some political reason of their own.

I am informed that Jafer Agha has been intriguing with a Russian Consul in Persia, but whether it is he of Tabreez or Urmi, I cannot say.

I hope that my answer to Jafer Agha meets with your approval.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL.

Inclosure 2 in No. 31.

Jafer Agha to Vice-Consul Tyrrell.

(Translation.)

FOR some time I have remained without news of your honoured health and safety [except] to this extent, that, according to hearsay, you had gone to the region of Mush, and, having been looking for a result to the Petition I had presented, no sign or intelligence has been [received by me], and this is not worthy of the reputation of an English Representative. No effect has been observed from the presentation of a telegram which I laid before the English Emperor; perhaps, if you do not forward my request and [give me an] answer, I will make a complaint about you. It is necessary that in this connection you send news to Constantinople, and I myself would have come in person to the protection of the British Consulate, but, owing to the severity of the winter, I was not able to prove [this intention] in person, nor, owing to my ruined state, to come to your presence; and if you ask why I again went back to Persia, [I reply], having been left without intelligence from the Persian Government, it was not possible to return. I presented a Petition to Constantinople through the Vali of Bitlis, and, moreover, they accepted my Petition; but the Vali of Van and the Mutessarif of Bashkala, having taken bribes and adopted an obstructive attitude, delayed the fulfilment of the order of the Government towards me. At length, having remained inactive till the arrival of winter, more than 250 of my men were caused to die, and remained under the snow. Helpless, I came to Persian territory.

Now you are a Government official, it is necessary for you to try and obtain a result of the communications and news contained in this telegram of mine, both from the English and Ottoman Governments. Whatever they wish me to do, wherever it may be arranged or desired [for me to go], I will come with you. Praise be to God! No doubt the mighty English Government, being powerful, can again take my land from the Persian Government, or let it cause a place of settlement [to be given me] through the Turkish Government. Or, if these things may not be, let it be [somewhere] in its own territory, that the whole of us may go there. As I have served the Persian Government for some years, so I will faithfully serve the mighty English Government for some years.

(Signed) JAFER TAYYAR,

January 13, 1905. *Chief of the Shekak Tribe.*

Inclosure 3 in No. 31.

Draft Telegram from Jafer Agha, intended for transmission to the King.

(Translation.)

FOR many years my ancestors, being Chiefs of 10,000 families of the Shekak tribe, have been famous. My habitation and native land was in Persian territory, and it is well known that I never drew back in any way from doing service to the Persian Government. The control of that part of the Shekak tribe which is in the Province of Azerbaijan and the district of Chahri was allotted to me by the Persian Government, and from time to time I was the recipient of jewelled swords and various kinds of decorations from the Persian Government on account of my services and faithfulness on the frontier; and this year, without cause, a large army with guns was sent against me by the Persian Government. After some days' fighting, the loss which I sustained from [the action of] the Persian Government was more than 10,000. With a few families of my tribe I abandoned my home, and, helpless, migrated. On account of the unreliability of the telegraph offices and of the local Governments on the Turkish frontier, I forwarded a petition to His Majesty the Sultan Abdul Hamid through the Vali of Bitlis. Orders for the acceptation of my submission and for our settlement were issued by the Government.

The Vali of Van and the Mutessarif of Hekkiari, having taken bribes from certain officials, did not give effect to the orders of the Government, and left me with my tribe in the summer pastures on the frontier. 250 of my men have died from the rigours of the winter; we have not been able to bury many of them, and even now some of our corpses have remained under the snow. Now we have remained helpless and without means of support between the two Powers [Turkey and Persia], and I have remained, without remedy. These few words of petition from your servant I have presented through Captain Tyrrell, British Consul at Van, to the glorious capital of England. If God wills, doubtless [my petition] will be accepted and fulfilled. The English Government is so powerful and able that it will command our unhindered settlement, either by the Persian Government or else in the territory of the Ottoman Government. If these things may not be, let us be settled in the territory of the English Government. Be pleased to command an answer to the petition of your servant through the Van Consul, Captain Tyrrell.

(Signed) JAFER TAYYAR,
Chief of the tribe of Persian Shekaks.

January 13, 1905.

Inclosure 4 in No. 31.

Reply to Jafer Agha's Letters.

TO Jafer Aghá, Chief of the Shekak tribe:—

Owing to my having been away in Mush, I have only lately received your two letters, the last of which, with a telegram, was brought by the hand of Ahmed Sherif.

On account of our friendship I am grieved at the distressed state revealed by a study of your second letter.

I cannot forward your telegram, as I do not consider it a part of my duty to do so, and I would advise you not to waste your time and money in complaining of my refusal to do so, as the British Government does not consider complaints of this sort against its officials.

For the sake of our friendship I have spoken unofficially to the Vali here and to the Persian Consul-General, and, in the name of humanity, I will do all I can to help people who are suffering.

The question of your settlement in Osmanli territory is the business of the Vali alone, and that of your return to Chahri is only referable to the Persian Government.

You mentioned your intention of seeking the protection of this Consulate. If you should come merely for the renewing of our acquaintance and for a friendly visit I shall be pleased to see you, but I cannot receive refugees or people who come on any political pretext.

Still, I repeat that, for the reasons given above, I shall always be glad to do anything I can for you in an unofficial and private way.

(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain,*
His Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van.

February 3, 1905.

No. 32.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 77.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 13, 1905.

I HAVE received Mr. Townley's despatch No. 134 of the 28th ultimo, forwarding a report from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van on the subject of correspondence which has recently passed between him and Jafer Agha, Chief of the Abdin Section of the Shekaks.

The terms of Captain Tyrrell's letter to Jafer Agha have my approval.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 33.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 20.)

(No. 164.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 14, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell, Military Attaché to this Embassy, respecting the distribution of troops in the 4th (Erzingan) Corps.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 33.

Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 6.)
Sir, *Constantinople, March* 11, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a distribution table* of the troops in the 4th Ordu (Erzingan), comprising the Armenian districts and country along the Trans-Caucasus frontier.

It will be noticed that 13 battalions (6,000 men) are still retained on the Mush, west of Lake Van, and in the Sasun Mountains, while 7 battalions are in Bitlis, Sairt, and south of the Sasun district.

The usual garrison of 6 battalions (2,500 men) is along the Russian frontier with 2 battalions in Erzeroum and 4 battalions in Erzingan.

The garrison of Van and neighbourhood is 7 battalions, which is one battalion less than usual.

The remaining troops are in the Kharput and Sivas vilayets with 3 battalions in the Dersim country. The total number of troops in this corps are 21,000 infantry 3000 cavalry, 30 batteries of artillery, and 2,000 fortress artillery in the Erzeroum Fortress, or a total of 30,000 of all arms.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL,
Lieutenant-Colonel, Military Attaché.

No. 34.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received April 3.)

(No. 198.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 27, 1905.

WITH reference to Mr. Townley's despatch No. 128 of the 21st ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting the release of three of the innocent persons confined in prison for the Armenian murder case, and the continued detention of seven others.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 34.

Acting Vice-Consul Young to Mr. Townley.

(No. 6.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, March* 4, 1905.

REFERRING to my despatch No. 3 of the 9th ultimo with regard to the murder of two Armenians last November and the irregular proceedings of the local authorities in that connection, I have the honour to report that three innocent persons, who had been in prison for 3½ months without trial, were at length released this afternoon. Their names are Asfurian, Ketcheji Jacob, and Ahmed-e-Jowi.

* Not printed.

The other persons (six in number) enumerated in the despatch referred to, besides one, Emin-é-Selim, since arrested, are still in prison.

As there would appear to be no evidence against any of them, it being notorious who were the perpetrators of the crime, it is to be hoped that the seven innocent persons may shortly be released, and that the criminals, in the interest of public security, may eventually be dealt with according to the law.

I venture respectfully to confirm all that I have previously reported on this subject, and to call attention to the deplorable impression which has been created by the open contempt of propriety and justice which has characterized the action of the authorities throughout.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. WILKIE YOUNG.

No. 35.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received April 17.)

(No. 201.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 31, 1905.*

WITH reference to Mr. Townley's despatch No. 904 of the 29th November, 1901, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting on the steps taken for the survey of the Ma'an–Akaba section of the Hejaz Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 35.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 14.)
Sir, *Damascus, March 18, 1905.*

I HAVE had the honour to report to your Excellency this day, by telegraph, the fact that an Imperial Irade has just been received for the immediate survey of the country between Ma'an and Akaba with a view to the construction of a railway connecting these two points. I hear that Herr Meissner, the Chief Engineer of the Hejaz Railway, has been instructed to attend to the execution of this order without further delay, and that three engineers belonging to the staff of the main line have already been told off for the construction of this branch as soon as the survey is completed. I am given to understand that permission to make this railway has frequently been solicited by the authorities here but has always hitherto been refused. It is conjectured that the great difficulties encountered recently in obtaining means of transport for both men and warlike stores from Ma'an to Akaba have been the chief factors in bringing about the acceleration of the execution of a project which has long been in contemplation.

The distance from Ma'an to Akaba—as the crow flies—is (about) 70 miles.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 36.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received April 10.)

(No. 212. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, April 4, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of an interesting report by His Majesty's Consul-General at Smyrna, giving a general account of the administrative condition of his Consular district during the past year.

I venture to call your Lordship's attention to the deplorable picture presented by Mr. Cumberbatch's statements, which are, I regret to say, only too true, and his observations respecting maladministration and general corruption of officials are applicable to-day to most of the vilayets of the Empire.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 36.

Consul-General Cumberbatch to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 15. Secret and Confidential.)
Sir, *Smyrna, March 28, 1905.*

IN my Annual Report on the administrative and economic condition of affairs in my Consular district (the 1st September, 1903), I enumerated three causes to account for the unsatisfactory state of things then obtaining; they were—(1) The draining of the country of its revenues; (2) the increased power of corruption in high administrative circles; and (3) the growing insecurity of life and property.

I regret that, though we still have two of the most enlightened statesmen of Turkey in the Provinces of Aidin and the Archipelago, which, apart from Samos and the Sandjak of Aivali (Broussa) and Adalia (Konia), comprise my Consular district, have the same tale to tell.

The activity and anxiety of the agents of the Finance Ministry, now placed under the direct control of the Special Finance Commission now sitting at the Palace, are keener than ever, and the people, high and low, are at their wits' end to know what to do to meet their demands on their purses, as not only are they very exacting as to the payment of arrears, but they press very hard for the exaction of the taxes of the current and even forthcoming year.

All this money is remitted to Constantinople, nothing being allowed to be retained for public works, such as prisons, schools, roads, &c., and very little indeed for the payment of salaries, which are several months in arrears. Requests made by the Defterdars for grants towards such payments are taken no notice of, but imperative orders for more money are received instead.

On one occasion last year the Vali had to furnish a few pounds out of his own pocket to supply stationery for the Konak, the supply having run out and Constantinople refusing to sanction the necessary outlay to buy more.

Two weeks ago some forty or fifty officers and men of the Smyrna Gendarmerie Corps, whose pay is nine months in arrears, proceeded to the Konak and laid down their swords and rifles, stating they refused to work unless they were paid. The Vali advanced one month's salary out of his own pocket, and gave promise of two more shortly.

The Procureur-Général told a friend of mine that he could not get his clerks to attend to cases forming the subject of the vast correspondence between him and the other Government Departments, because they only attended to business in which parties here were interested, and who made it worth their while to work. When he remonstrated, they asked him, how could they be expected to work for a Government which did not pay them, and how could they live unless they accepted presents from outside?

While this is all going on in the provinces, the Special Financial Commission alluded to above has paragraphs inserted in the papers now and then, to the effect that stringent orders have been given for the regular payment of salaries all round.

If the public and officials knew that all the revenues were spent for the soldiers in European Turkey or any other pressing national want, they would be content to suffer patiently, but the suspicion is that such is far from being the case.

The other form of "squeezing" the public mentioned in my last report, and of which the young son of Kiamil Pasha is a past master, is also as rampant as ever. It is alleged, I think truthfully, that every official in the Civil Service has to make some contribution towards his private income if he wishes to maintain his post; whilst, on the other hand, any one needing assistance, whether for good or evil, has recourse to Said Bey's powerful protection, which has its price.

To such depths of cunning is this youthful pupil of the corrupt clique reputed to descend that he has been even suspected of conniving with brigands in the interior. But, as at present informed, I am not inclined to give credence to this story.

The natural question one asks oneself is, why does his father permit all this, seeing that he has earned the reputation for strict honesty and fair dealing? There can be only one explanation, and that is that he is himself too thoroughly disgusted with what he knows goes on in high quarters, and shuts his eyes to his favourite son's malpractices.

His Highness' enemies at the Palace are continually thwarting him in every conceivable way, and stick at nothing to cause him annoyance and worry in order to induce the Sultan to mistrust him. The latest instance of such treatment will suffice as an instance.

A certain Ahmed Essad Bey, a man of some education, was exiled to Smyrna some months ago as Director of the School of Arts and Trades. About a fortnight ago, acting on a report from the Vali, the Palace decided that Ahmed Essad should be sent to Angora owing to his having done something irregular, and instructions were sent to Kiamil Pasha by the Minister of the Interior to that effect. Before his Highness could arrange for Essad Bey's journey, and whilst the latter was detained in a room at the Konak, a certain Refik Bey, an Aide-de-camp of the Sultan, temporarily here, presented himself before the Vali and demanded the person of Essad Bey, saying that the Military Commander had received an Imperial Irade ordering Essad to be brought to Constantinople. Upon the Vali refusing to comply with his request, as he had received no such instructions himself, Refik Bey pulled out his revolver, went to the room where Essad was confined, and walked out of the Konak arm-in-arm with him, threatening to shoot down any one who tried to stop him executing the "Sultan's orders."

The defiance of the Vali's authority in his official residence caused great consternation in Turkish circles, and people looked upon the successful action of the Aide-de-camp acting on behalf of the Military Commander as a sign of Kiamil Pasha's impending recall, but nothing more has been heard of the matter, and Essad Bey is no doubt employed by his enemies in hatching further plots against him at the Palace.

Though brigandage is of a more or less permanent character, it reached unusually large proportions last month for the time of the year, especially in the neighbourhood of Aidin.

Our Vice-Consul at the latter place and a British subject at Thyra having furnished me with reports as to the apparent immunity with which the brigands were carrying on their work (which chiefly consisted in sending threatening letters accompanying demands for large sums of money), and hearing that the same thing was going on in the Alascheir district, I communicated my information to the Vali, and urged him to take the necessary steps to put a stop to the evil, especially as in one case the brigands had killed their victim, a Greek Rayah. From what his Highness tells me, the audacity of the brigands is due to three causes: firstly, the apathy of the gendarmes owing to their not receiving their pay; secondly, the insufficiency of the gendarmerie owing to the refusal of the Sublime Porte to allot the funds for the necessary complement of men; and, thirdly, the refusal of the Sublime Porte to supply the gendarmes sent to cope with brigands with up-to-date rifles, but expecting them to fight with old Selsnieder rifles, while the brigands are armed with the most modern weapon.

Kiamil Pasha asked me for copies of the reports I had received, and he has sent translations to the Palace urging the necessity of complying with the requirements of the case. If possible, foreign intervention is to be avoided. Up to the 23rd instant, when I last saw him, he had only received promises of help; in the meantime little or nothing can be done.

No foreigner has so far been molested, but nevertheless there is no knowing when a case may not occur, and though every warning is given to British subjects travelling in the interior, should a British or other foreign subject fall into their hands, there is sure to be a great stir, as the blame will more than ever attach to the authorities.

The foregoing general remarks apply more especially to the Aidin Vilayet, but my information goes to show that the other parts of my Consular district suffer equally from the rapacity of the tax-gatherers. In Mitylene especially there was some effervescence last month among the Hellenic subjects, somewhat similar to events in Smyrna in the spring of 1904, in connection with the execution of the "temettu" tax, which had been allowed to remain in abeyance hitherto. Public demonstrations were held, and the support of the foreign Consuls invited, especially that of our Vice-Consul, but, acting under my instructions, Mr. Hadkinson refrained from doing more than counselling the Greek Vice-Consul not to oppose the levying of the tax which was paid by Hellenic subjects here, and advising the Governor of Mitylene not to be too exacting in the collection of the tax if he would avoid the same troubles as occurred here last year.

The Vali of the Archipelago, Abedini Pasha, who is an active and interested

guardian of the interests of the Tobacco Régie, contrives to give cause of universal complaint on account of his relentless opposition to the cultivation of tobacco. He still enjoys his old reputation for enriching himself in every conceivable way, and his example is of course followed by his subordinates in all ranks.

The Courts in his province are if anything worse than those of the Aidin district, but as there are so very few British residents in the islands, I have very seldom occasion to interfere as I have to here, where nearly the whole time of my dragoman is taken up in preventing British subjects being the victims of unscrupulous officials of the various Government Departments.

Notwithstanding all these hindrances, the agricultural industry and the commercial business of the country is carried on satisfactorily enough, to judge from the traffic receipts of the Railway Companies and the Customs revenues at Smyrna, which market acts as the centre for all the business of this port of Asia Minor and the islands. But in this connection the preponderating influence of foreign management and influence must be kept in mind, and in the absence of which matters would certainly be intolerable. At the present moment the Government, by a short-sighted policy, are doing their best to drive away to Greece the important sponge-fishing industry which forms the main occupation of the inhabitants of the islands of the Sporades.

The Island of Samos must be treated apart, and the only feature which calls for notice is the apparently hopeless state of financial difficulties in which the islanders find themselves, owing to rash expenditure on public works, such as harbours and roads, which unforeseen failures of grape crops and earthquake calamities have rendered it still more difficult to meet.

Another cause of unrest and obstacle to progress in the island is the great number of unoccupied men who, having received a certain amount of education, consider themselves fit for nothing but Government employment or a seat in the Assembly, and who join the ranks of the Opposition to work for the overthrow of the Prince-Governor or Senate of the day, or both, and the dissolution of the Assembly, in hopes of gaining some personal advantage. There are no political parties as understood elsewhere. It is simply a continual fight for place, high or low, a universal change of officials, administrative and municipal, following on a change in the Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

No. 37.

Central Hentchakist Committee to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received April* 11.)

Excellence, *Le 29 Mars*, 1905.

EN 1895, à la suite d'événements déplorables dans la Turquie d'Asie, suivis du massacre général des Arméniens, les habitants de Zeythoun, menacés dans leur vie, dans leur existence, se virent forcés de prendre les armes. Après une lutte héroïque contre les troupes régulières et contre les Bachi-Bouzoucks, armés à la solde du Gouvernement Turc, ils ont accepté de capituler, sur l'intervention des Puissances Signataires du Traité de Berlin.

Depuis le 10 Février, 1896, date à laquelle fut signé l'Acte de Capitulation, le Gouvernement du Sultan essaye par tous les moyens de fomenter des troubles et de provoquer les Zeythouniotes à la révolte, dans le but de s'offrir un prétexte pour exterminer ce que reste de ces braves montagnards.

Permettez-nous, Excellence, de porter ces agissements d'un Gouvernement, auteur principal du massacre de 300,000 Arméniens, à la connaissance de votre Gouvernement, afin qu'il veuille bien prendre le devant d'une catastrophe qu'il est à tous les points de vue désirable d'éviter.

En acceptant le rôle de médiatrices en 1896, les Puissances Signataires du Traité de Berlin se sont engagées à garantir aux Zeythouniotes la sécurité pour leur vie, pour leur honneur, et pour leurs biens. Cette garantie trouve sa confirmation dans l'Article 6 de l'Acte de Capitulation, et il ne saurait être efficace que si les Grandes Puissances, animées du désir d'apaisement et de l'application des Traités en Turquie, prenaient toutes les mesures requises pour arrêter la main du Gouvernement Turc dans l'exécution de ses sinistres projets.

Dans l'intérêt même de la paix, nous jugeons de notre devoir de porter à la connaissance de votre Excellence que les autorités militaires Ottomanes déploient depuis quelque temps une grande activité dont le but ne saurait échapper à personne.

Il s'agit tout simplement de donner le coup de grâce à l'œuvre néfaste et inhumaine de 1895 et 1896, en pulvérisant les maisons des Zeythouniotes, en dispersant ou en massacrant ceux-ci, et en les forçant de s'expatrier ou d'abandonner le foyer de leurs ancêtres. On a déjà signifié aux Zeythouniotes d'avoir à quitter leurs habitations actuelles pour s'établir en masse dans le district de Bazardjik, à l'est de Marash. Les Zeythouniotes ont refusé, à juste raison, de se conformer à cette demande arbitraire des autorités Turques, qui interpréteront le refus de séditieux pour se donner un prétexte à massacre.

Déjà la garnison de Zeythoun a été augmentée, et dernièrement on y a expédié trois canons de gros calibre pour la caserne de cette ville.

Tous ces agissements, tous ces actes, se produisant et se commettant en pleine paix, sans raison plausible, sont de nature à troubler les esprits et à provoquer les habitants de Zeythoun à des actes qu'ils préféreraient éviter.

Nous prions respectueusement les Puissances Signataires du Traité de Berlin de prendre les mesures propres à arrêter une nouvelle effusion de sang dans ces régions. Mais le but humanitaire ne saurait s'atteindre que lorsque le Gouvernement Ottoman aura arrêté ses armements injustifiables, aura cessé ses provocations, ses actes d'hostilité—en violation flagrante des Articles de Capitulation—contre un peuple avide de paix et de tranquillité et qui se sent de nouveau menacé dans son existence même.

Agréez, &c.
Le Comité Central du Parti Hentchakist Arménien.

No. 38.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received May* 1.)

(No. 256.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 18, 1905.

IN reply to your Lordship's despatch No. 30 of the 28th January last, relative to the condition of affairs at Van, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, whom I requested to report to me on the matter.

Your Lordship will see that, in but too many respects, Captain Tyrrell's information bears out the deplorable account of the poverty of the population in those regions, and that he mentions various measures which might be taken to alleviate the existing misery.

I propose to submit to the Sublime Porte the proposals which Captain Tyrrell puts forward with the object of keeping down the price of corn, and which appear to me to be calculated to produce a good result.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 38.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10.)

Sir, *Van, March* 20, 1905.

IN reply to the request of His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires of the 6th February, that I should furnish such information as to enable him to make the report desired by the Marquess of Lansdowne in his despatch No. 30 of the 28th January, I have the honour to submit a statement of the actual conditions prevailing here.

It is perfectly true that, as stated in the letter of the Women's Armenian Relief Fund to the Marquess of Lansdowne, there is great poverty here, and that the price of grain is very high.

I can speak from personal knowledge of the city of Van, where the American missionaries are making daily distributions of bread and clothes to crowds of destitute people.

Of the surrounding country I can only speak at second hand, as it has been practically impossible to get about or visit villages during the past severe winter, and the roads will probably not be open for another month.

But the reports received from the villages lead me to believe that there is great poverty and misery all over the country, and this impression is confirmed by the fact that there is a large number of paupers now in Van who have come in from the villages to subsist on charity. It is expected that this number will be largely increased in another month, when the state of the roads permits more people to come in.

Lord Lansdowne's correspondents speak of a threatened famine. I am hopeful that there will be no actual famine; and I am confident that there need be none if proper steps be taken in time to avert it.

There is wheat in the country, and if, when the roads open, it could be brought here in large quantities from the districts about Sert, and from the grain-producing plains north of the lake (in both of which districts there are said to be large surplus stocks), the fear of famine would pass. There is even wheat much nearer, and in Van itself. But the holders of the stocks refuse to sell, in the hope of raising the price. This is always a regrettable feature of times of famine or scarcity here. Among these men who are trying to force up the price, regardless of the sufferings of the poor, are rich Armenians, who want to make money out of what may come from Europe for the relief of their starving compatriots. When it was known, a short time ago, that the American Mission was intending to buy wheat for relief purposes, the price was at once raised.

The Local Government, with the best intentions, has forbidden the public bakeries to sell bread beyond a certain price. The result is that the bakers, who can only obtain their corn at a high, and hitherto rising, rate, have to adulterate the bread, so as to be able to sell it within the limit of price fixed by the Government. Thus, though bread is obtained fairly cheap, it contains very little nourishment, and is almost uneatable, except by people who have nothing else.

The fear of famine and the present distress are, then, largely due to a purely artificial cause—a corner in wheat.

I would suggest (1) that the Government be empowered, or ordered, to force the holders of wheat to sell at a reasonable price; (2) that the Government should bring wheat in from the far districts where surpluses exist, under contract to sell it here for relief purposes.

I propose that the importation of this wheat should be done by the Government, because they could use the powers conferred by (1) to get the wheat at a certain price, whereas if the American Mission or other relief agency were to try and bring the wheat in the holders of the stocks would still raise the price, and the local officials would also hope to get something by the deal, and might obstruct the exportation if they were not satisfied.

The largest holder of wheat is undoubtedly Hussein Pasha, of Patnotz (see my Nos. 46 and 48 of October 1904), and the Local Government is powerless against him without orders from Constantinople.

In considering the chances of famine, a good deal also depends on the amount of crops already sown, of which the grain would not be available till towards autumn, while certain roots and vegetables would be ready earlier. It is extremely difficult to form an estimate on this point. And here the revolutionary movement, by reason of which the people do not sow because it is doubtful if they will be in their homes to reap the succeeding harvest, is largely to blame for a deficiency in the land ploughed and sown, and ready to yield its ordinary crop. However, apart from this, such statistics as I have been able to obtain from a few villages go to show that the greater part of the crops sown has already been mortgaged to meet last year's demand for money. That is, the crops, when ripe, will not go to feed the villagers, but to the creditors, who are mostly neighbouring Kurds. In one village that I know of, practically the whole sowing is already mortgaged.

Even so, this grain is in the country, and famine would not result from the above conditions if the mortgagees could be forced to sell it for relief, if necessary.

It is true that the taxes press very heavily, and that during the last year or two things have been getting worse—a state of affairs to which I have alluded in nearly every Quarterly Report.

On this subject of taxation I would beg respectfully to refer your Excellency to the first three reasons and suggestions in my No. 44 of the 28th September, 1904; and, for the mortgaging of land, to the sixth reason in the same despatch. The responsibility lies with the Central Government, and one cannot well hope for improved conditions until the entire method of administration is changed.

It is easy to suggest that taxation should be temporarily remitted; it is easy even for the Porte to assent to this course, and to give the necessary promises. But where

is the money to come from to run the Local Government? As it is, all salaries are in arrear, and the deplorable, not to say dangerous, state of the soldiers of the 8th Division is due to their being without pay, without clothes, and sometimes short of food, simply because the Local Government cannot provide these things.

The increased taxation of the last two years seems to be due to the increased wants of the Central Government, not to those of the Local one. Hence I cannot see that the former will provide the money required by the Government of Van in place of the taxation remitted. In addition to which, previous experience does not lead me to believe that the pecuniary promises of the Porte will be entirely fulfilled. Also, under the present régime, the Vali himself cannot prevent the lesser officials and the Kurds from taking more than is due from the Armenians; and even if the usual kind of orders for remission of taxation were received, the necessity of finding money would cause the continuance of official predatory visits to the villages, winked at by the authorities.

In view of the present state of the country, I hope that orders for a temporary remission of taxation may be issued, but, for the reasons given above, I am not very sanguine that such orders will sensibly relieve the tax-payers.

Before concluding, I must point out that, in spite of the prevailing poverty and distress, the Revolutionists are still adding their quota to the burdens of the villagers by forcing them to buy fire-arms, even though to do so they are obliged to sell what little the tax-gatherers have left them.

I herewith return the inclosed printed document as requested.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 39.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 284.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, April 26, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum reporting the instructions received by the Russian Consul not to *viser* passports of Armenians for the Caucasus.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 39.

Acting Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, April 15, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the Russian Consulate has received instructions not to *viser* the passports of any Armenians, of whatever nationality they may be, who wish to cross the frontier into the Caucasus.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. SHIPLEY.

No. 40.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 153.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, May 3, 1905.*

THE Turkish Ambassador called upon me to-day, and I took advantage of the opportunity to mention to him several matters which have recently formed the subject of discussions between yourself and the Turkish Government.

After touching on the obstructive attitude which the Turkish Government had adopted during the six months preceding the final settlement of the Aden frontier, I pointed out to his Excellency that while Railway Concessions with heavy kilometric guarantees were being constantly granted to foreign Companies, the only British line in Asia Minor, the Smyrna-Aidin Railway, which was self-supporting and enjoyed no

such guarantee, was persistently refused the extension which it urgently requires. The representations of His Majesty's Ambassador in support of the Company were disregarded, and the attitude of the Porte constituted, in effect, an unfriendly discrimination against British enterprise.

I then mentioned the arbitrary withdrawal from the British Steam-ship Companies in the Persian Gulf of privileges in regard to supplies of coal, which they had enjoyed for many years, and the repeated refusal of the Sublime Porte to grant to the British Khedivial Mail Company coaling facilities similar to those permitted to all other foreign mail-steamers entering the port of Constantinople. These complaints had been the subject of representations not only by His Majesty's Embassy at Constantinople but also by myself to his Excellency, but up to the present time nothing whatever had been done to meet them.

I added that further grounds for dissatisfaction were:—

The obstructive attitude of the Sublime Porte towards all British mining enterprise in Turkey and the refusal of concessions to British subjects, even in cases where they have incurred large sacrifices in preliminary operations with the full consent of the Turkish Government.

Again, the Sublime Porte had up to the present time failed to fulfil its solemn promises to pay within a specified period to the British concessionnaires the remaining moiety, with interest, of the purchase-money of the Haifa-Damascus Railway.

The treatment by the Turkish Government of the British firms interested in the construction of ships of war and the provision of munitions of war had also been singularly unfair. British ship-building firms had modified their terms in accordance with the demands of the Turkish authorities but without result, while the tenders made by British manufacturers of arms at the invitation of the Imperial authorities had been subsequently rejected in favour of the less advantageous offers of foreign rivals. In neither case had any explanation been vouchsafed of the conduct of the Turkish authorities.

I furnished his Excellency with a Memorandum corresponding with the observations which I had made, and he undertook to communicate the substance of them to the Turkish Government.

Before leaving my room his Excellency handed to me an *aide-mémoire*, in which it was stated that a report had lately been received by the Porte from the Vali of Bussorah to the effect that four British war-ships, which were at that moment at Koweit, were, notwithstanding the opposition of the Shoikh, carrying out certain operations in the neighbourhood of Djehre, Beana, and Umkasr as a preliminary to the construction of fortifications around Koweit. Such proceedings were, his Excellency said, of a nature to constitute a violation of the *status quo*, of which the maintenance at Koweit had been agreed upon by the two Governments, and he was instructed to call my attention to the matter.

I asked his Excellency what evidence there was to corroborate the Vali's statement that the presence of these British ships had anything whatever to do with the construction of fortifications in the neighbourhood of Koweit. I thought we had good reasons for complaining of the manner in which such allegations were continually put forward by the Turkish Government, and I told his Excellency that the distorted and often baseless reports of alleged English proceedings in the Persian Gulf and on the coast of Arabia furnished by Turkish officials to the Sublime Porte—reports which, on examination, invariably proved to be incorrect—exhibited such marked hostility and ill-will, and such an evident desire to create ill-feeling between the two Governments, that His Majesty's Government considered they had a right to demand that the officers who were responsible for them should be censured, and, if the practice was continued, removed from their posts.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 41.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 8.)

(No. 294.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 1, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 256 of the 18th ultimo, I have the honour to report that I have caused the measures suggested by Captain Tyrrell for the relief of the distress in the Van district to be brought to the notice of the Grand Vizier, and

having subsequently received a further despatch from that officer on the same subject, copy of which I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith, I instructed Mr. Lamb to again speak with Ferid Pasha.

His Highness has directed that a telegram be sent to the Vali of Van asking for his views on Captain Tyrrell's recommendations, and instructing him not to harass for payment of taxes people who were obviously destitute.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 41.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 12.)
Sir, *Van, March* 30, 1905.

IN my No. 10 of the 20th instant I reported on the state of the Armenian population, and discussed the reasons of the prevailing distress, the chances of its developing into famine, and the steps that might be taken to improve matters. I now have the honour to report that conditions seem to be rapidly getting worse. With the advent of milder weather destitute villagers continue to flock towards the city, whereas, at this time of year, they usually prefer to remain at home for the agricultural operations which are necessary in spring. Fresh reports are constantly coming in from the distant villages, of which information was hitherto wanting, and these reports are pessimistic. Dr. Raynolds tells me that he is receiving an average of five petitions per day from villages which demand help; while Dr. Ussher reports that cases are being received in his hospital which he can only attribute to starvation. That is, he can find nothing the matter with the patients except that they have been without sufficient nourishment. Some are suffering from internal disorders apparently brought on by improper food, the want of grain having driven them to make bread, or a substitute for it, from anything they can get.

As stated in the despatch referred to above, there is wheat in the country, and I am of opinion that there would be no famine if the steps which I recommended be taken to avert it. I would earnestly beg your Excellency to do what you can in the sense of my suggestions.

As far as the remission of taxation and the distribution of relief go, here is an example of what is likely to happen unless stringent orders are given and carried out, to prevent this sort of thing.

On the 12th, 13th, and 14th March the American Mission distributed 925 piastres in a large and needy village in the Nahie of Archag, about eight hours from Van. On the 15th March two tehsildars arrived there and took about two-thirds of the sum in the name of taxes.

I told the Vali that if this continued no more relief would be distributed, as the money was intended to tide the people over the present hard times, and not to go immediately into the coffers of the Turkish Government. He therefore at once sent a telegram to the Mudir of Archag to the effect that money or wheat distributed by the Americans at the present time was not to be taken, and he also promised to make this order general throughout the vilayet. He fully recognizes that relief is necessary for the population, and that it is to the ultimate benefit of the Government that nothing should be done to prevent money from Europe from coming here. But I am afraid that not much is to be hoped merely from the fact that the Vali is well disposed. Money is always urgently needed, and the subordinate officials will continue to take all they can from the Armenians, unless sufficient for their salaries, and to carry on the Government, is forthcoming from elsewhere.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 42.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 319.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May* 9, 1905.

HIS Majesty's Vice-Consul has reported by telegraph that a fight has taken place in the plain of Moush between insurgents and a force of Turkish troops, in which two officers are reported to have been killed. From an allusion which Mr. Heathcote makes to a despatch sent by post, which has not yet reached me, it appears that this is the second encounter of the kind which has taken place, and he reports further that two other similar affairs are said to have taken place, and that a band of forty men have appeared coming from Russia. I cannot help feeling considerable anxiety as to the tranquillity and condition of these regions during the approaching summer, and I have lost no opportunity within the last few months of impressing this view upon the Grand Vizier, and of urging his Highness to do all that lies in his power to prevent the Armenians from being oppressed by illegal taxation, and driven into the arms of the insurgent bands, who are preparing to cross the frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 43.

Women's Armenian Relief Fund to Foreign Office.—(Received May 10.)

Dear Sir, *Dunchurst, Putney, May* 18, 1905.

I BEG to acknowledge with sincere thanks the courteous communications received this morning through you from the Marquess of Lansdowne.

I inclose a report from the head of the American Mission in Van upon the famine conditions which prevail in the province of that name, and remain, &c.,
(Signed) (Mrs.) MADELEINE COLE.

Inclosure in No. 43.

Dr. Raynolds to Women's Armenian Relief Fund.

Dear Friends, *Van, April* 3, 1905.

THE situation here in Van is daily growing worse, while means in hand to alleviate distress do not increase. We have tried to give information to friends in Constantinople and Germany by wire, stating that famine conditions were prevailing, that a large proportion of the population were hungry, and money was needed for food and for seed. We waited anxiously for an answer to come from these wires, but two weeks passed, and finally, when I was at the telegraph office last Saturday, I was informed that the wire for Germany went as far as Constantinople, but was not allowed to go any further, being considered of a political nature, and so a breaking of the law, which made it proper to retain the money paid for the telegram, while at the same time refusing to deliver it. They claimed that the one sent to Mr. Peet was delivered, but as we get no word from him on the subject, while a wire has come from him on another matter, I do not believe that even that was delivered.

About three weeks since we assigned the funds then in hand, amounting to £T. 1,240, mostly from Germany, with about 200 lires from England, to different departments, about 100 lires for sick poor in the hospital, 15 per week for relief in the city, 200 for the region south of the city called Haigaitore, 100 for villages near the city, 100 for the region north of the city, this arrangement to last till Easter, this plan having been going on for the city several weeks already. Since then word has come to us from a very large number of villages describing the wretched condition of the people, while the reports which our own distributors bring us show that the meagre supplies which people had laid in in the fall are rapidly giving out, and so the number of the hungry is fast increasing. For instance, in 21 new villages they found 1,259 houses, 573 of which were already in such a state of destitution that they gave the sum of 2½ piastres (5½*d.*) to each of the 2,453 persons in these houses. This, you see,

was nearly half the population, and did not include those who had even a few days' provisions in the house. By the time another round is made probably half of the remaining houses will also be in the number of the utterly destitute. They used considerably more than half of the 100 lires assigned on this first round, and it is evident that 2½ piastres will not keep a person very many days. All that we hoped from this was to give the people a chance to mix a little flour with bark, or roots, or bran, or such famine food, and so support life. It is thus clear that the money thus granted will prove very inadequate for the absolute need of the people who are included in the arrangement, while very many villages—indeed, large sections of the province—were not at all included. We are now absolutely overwhelmed with applications for those actually starving, to which we can give no other answer than that if funds should come to us we will try to use them impartially according to the information we receive.

Life for us is becoming almost unendurable on account of the almost limitless suffering all about us which we are utterly powerless to relieve. It almost seems wicked to sit down ourselves and eat a full meal when so many are hungry on every hand. Thus far the price of grain has gone steadily up, and we have not ventured to buy lest we accelerate this upward tendency, while to give money involves the risk of the Government collectors taking it for taxes, as was done at one village. The Vali, however, has promised to see that this is not repeated. A large part of what we are giving in the city is in the form of work, which makes every lire do at least double work. Seed is very necessary.

Yours most sincerely,
(Signed) G. C. RAYNOLDS.

No. 44.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 22.)

(No. 330. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 12, 1905.*

HAVING found reason on previous occasions to question the accuracy of the reports made by the American missionary, Dr. Ussher, in regard to the treatment of the Armenians by the Turks, I thought it well to submit confidentially to His Majesty's Consul at Van the letter addressed to your Lordship on the 14th January last by the Chairman of the Committee of the Friends of Armenia, inclosing a report from Dr. Ussher (Confidential Print, Asiatic Turkey, the 14th January, Section 1), and I now have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a Confidential despatch which I have received from Captain Tyrrell, commenting on the statements contained in the report in question.

I am informing Captain Tyrrell that I see no objection to his asking Dr. Ussher for details as to the place and circumstances of the eleven murders cited in his letter.

The United States' Minister, whom I also spoke to, informed me that he regarded Dr. Ussher as most unreliable, and given to gross exaggeration owing to his innate dislike of the Turks and his inordinate fanaticism.

The same remarks apply to the lucubrations of Dr. Haskell, an American missionary in Macedonia, who recently sent a report to your Lordship, which was subsequently published in the press.

I venture to think that the "Times," at all events, might be confidentially warned against opening its columns to such irresponsible correspondents.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 1.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 16. Confidential.)
Sir, *Van, April 18, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge your Excellency's of the 22nd March, transmitting copy of a letter from Mr. E. W. Brooks, Chairman of the Committee of the Friends of Armenia, to the Marquess of Lansdowne, with inclosure (private letter from Dr. Ussher, of the American Mission at Van).

I humbly submit that the state of this part of the country is fairly represented in various despatches of mine, and that information of the state of the country in general is available in the Blue Books and published Consular correspondence.

I have often stated that the lot of the Armenians is a hard one, and that they suffer from a radically bad Government which ought to be changed, or very essentially modified. And I fail to see why the Friends of Armenia, *et hoc genus omne*, should disregard all this correspondence, and give unqualified credence to irresponsible letters like the one under review.

I have great respect for Dr. Ussher as a man, and am fully aware of his self-denying work here. But his letter is full of unjustifiable expressions, and of sweeping assertions which cannot be verified. I myself know by experience that Dr. Ussher's statements are unreliable, and I never accept any of them without careful personal inquiry. I can therefore quite sympathize with the "Governor," who (see the third paragraph of his letter as printed) did not arrest three men as murderers on Dr. Ussher's *ipse dixit*.

As the document and your Excellency's covering despatch are marked "Confidential," I have made no allusion to the matter, but I should like your Excellency's permission to ask Dr. Ussher for the details of the eleven murders of which he speaks.

The key to all this missionary correspondence is found in the last paragraph of Dr. Ussher's letter, "to stir public opinion by anything that we write"; and nothing is ever written by them to show the other side of the question—how far the Armenians are themselves to blame; outrages by the revolutionists; the difficulties with which the local authorities have to contend; any good work done by Turkish officials, &c.

Dr. Ussher's remarks as to the peculiar responsibility of England, and that she is "killing off the Armenians with Consular investigations," are only worthy of notice as showing the small amount of importance to be attached to any of his statements, and the narrow way in which the American missionaries in general *envisage* the whole question.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL.

No. 45.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 22.)

(No. 338.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 15, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 294 of the 1st instant I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a further despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Consul at Van reporting on the conditions of the country and the famine prospects in his Consular district.

Your Lordship will observe that, as a result of his personal investigations, Captain Tyrrell is of opinion that the reports of the distress and starvation in the Armenian villages have been considerably exaggerated, and he calls attention to the fact that in some instances the local Government has come to the help of the needy villagers by advancing sums of money without interest to enable them to purchase seed.

I have replied to Captain Tyrrell's despatch authorizing him to undertake the journey to the Shattakh district to investigate the conditions there prevailing. In my despatch No. 294 of the 1st instant I had the honour to report that the Grand Vizier had directed that a telegram be sent to the Vali of Van asking for his views on the recommendations made in Captain Tyrrell's previous report. I now learn that the Vali has replied that considerable distress really exists in his district.

The Grand Vizier further stated that he had ordered £ T. 1,000 to be held at the Vali's disposition for relief purposes, but admitted that this sum would probably prove insufficient. His Highness, on the 10th instant, wrote a letter to the Ministry of Commerce, of which the following is a translation:—

"The British Embassy having notified me that there were signs of dearth and scarcity in the Vilayet of Van, and that, the wheat being in the hands of speculators, the population was in danger of want, I caused an inquiry to be addressed to the

Vali, who has telegraphed, in reply, confirming the existence of distress. You will, therefore, at once cause £T. 2,000 to be paid over to the Vali from the local branch of the Agricultural Bank."

The "Levant Herald," of the 11th instant, published a statement to the effect that, in view of the distress in several districts of Van and Kiavash, the Agricultural Bank had decided to advance the sum of 1,000 liras to agriculturists on a solid security. The newspaper "Ikdam" states that 1,000 "chaps" of wheat, valued locally at 3,000 piastres, are to be taken from the Government stores at Boulenik (Bitlis Vilayet) and Anlab (Erzeroum Vilayet) for distribution among the necessitous.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 45.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 17.)

Van, April 20, 1905.

Sir,

REFERRING to the distress here and the prospects of a famine, which subjects have already been dealt with in my Nos. 10 and 12, I have the honour to inform your Excellency of how things are going on.

During the past fortnight, I have been able to visit some of the outlying districts, and ascertain by personal inspection the state of the villagers.

My first impression is that the reports, received chiefly by the American missionaries from Armenian sources, have been considerably exaggerated. I do not deny that there is poverty and individual cases of destitution (which ought to be helped by their fellow villagers), and that there was very little to be found in many of the houses, while in one or two villages there appeared to be no grain in hand except what they said was given by the missionaries.

But I failed to find starvation conditions anywhere, and nowhere could a single case be produced of a person actually suffering from want of food. Even in those villages which are badly off as regards the number of their cows, oxen, and sheep, there are fowls in plenty, and as long as these remain uneaten, one cannot say that the people have reached starvation point.

The people, without exception, struck me as being strong and healthy, and if they have now arrived at the end of their stores, they have certainly had enough to live on through the winter and up to the present time.

I also failed to find the bad bread, of which a great point has been made. In every house where I found bread it was of good quality, and generally of wheat.

The spring sowings were being carried on, as far as I could see, as usual, which would seem to show that the reports as to want of seed have also been exaggerated.

A good deal depended on the state in which the young crops from the autumn sowing were found to be after the snow had disappeared. Though there are a few complaints of these crops having rotted in the fields here and there, yet the general result is satisfactory; and as far as can be judged at so early a date, there are prospects of a good harvest. But, of course, this will depend on the weather, and some good rain will be needed during the next two months in order to fulfil expectations.

If all goes well, the prospect of a good harvest should, at no very distant date, have the effect of bringing down the price of wheat—for the holders will have to sell before the new wheat is reaped. Only with a poor harvest in prospect could they continue to hold their stocks and to keep up the prices without danger of eventually finding no market.

There remains the almost undeterminable factor of how much of the sowings are already mortgaged. But as all the other points have been exaggerated, it is probable that things under this head also are not nearly so bad as the Armenians make out. I believe that, taking the country all round, a good harvest will leave enough for the people to live on after satisfying their creditors. Probably certain villages have mortgaged the greater part of their expected crops, and doubtless there are individual cases where nothing will be left after satisfying the claims. But these cases are by no means the rule, and that such do exist does not make a famine.

The missionaries doubtless know their own business, and I have no desire to say anything which might prevent money from coming in response to their appeals from the missionaries. At the same time I feel bound to state that I consider that they are in the habit of using very exaggerated language in those appeals, and in their letters on the state of the country. There is no doubt in my mind that the Armenians here, as a whole, are being pauperized, and look too much for outside help in times of scarcity, as well as in times of political disquiet. English money is poured into this country like water, mostly on the strength of missionary reports; and though it does a great deal of good, aids real suffering, and assists some deserving cases, yet I think it is only fair to the donors that they should have the means of knowing that a large part of the money goes necessarily to tax collectors and to the Turkish Government, and that too, quickly; while another large part goes to people who only need it because they have not tried to help themselves, having learned to rely on outside charity.

The local government has commenced the distribution to needy villagers of money to buy seed. This money is being lent without interest till the harvest is gathered. If not then repaid, it will commence to bear interest from that date. I have not yet been able to get particulars of the amounts, nor of the principles on which this distribution is being conducted. The Vali tells me that £T. 1,000 was sent from Constantinople last autumn, that it has been lying in the bank ever since, and that it is this sum which is now being used for loans to the villagers to help them in their present needs.

That help is being given by the Government is also a point which should be noted when appealing for funds from abroad. I regret to have to report another case in which the tax collectors came to a village immediately after the distributors of relief had left it, and took some of the money which had been given. The Vali again assured me that this was contrary to his orders, and that he would stop it.

There are still numbers of destitute aliens in the city, as before reported.

Conditions are said to be bad in the Shattakh district, which is too far to be visited by me in the way that I have visited the villages round here. I should like to satisfy myself of the truth, or otherwise, of these reports also, and should be glad if your Excellency would give me permission to make the journey. I reckon that I should be away ten days or a fortnight.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 46.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 174.)

Foreign Office, May 27, 1905.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Lordship's despatch No. 338 of the 15th instant, transmitting a report from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van on the conditions of the country and the famine prospects in his district.

I learn with satisfaction that the Local Government are distributing seed money to the necessitous villagers without interest—that the Grand Vizier has ordered 2,000*l* to be placed at the disposal of the Vali for purposes of relief, and that other remedial measures have been announced.

I approve your Excellency's having authorized Captain Tyrrell to proceed to the Shattakh district.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 47.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 351. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 19, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reporting a rumoured suggestion of change of religion on the part of the Mush Armenians.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) FRANCIS STRONGE.

Inclosure in No. 47.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18. Confidential.)
Sir, *Bitlis, April 30, 1905.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 12 of this day, I have the honour to report that according to the messenger who brought the news that the taxes due by the repatriated mountaineers were to be levied on Mush town, the community were seriously discussing the advisability of abandoning the Gregorian Church for any other religion which would offer them some security against this and similar exactions, and that they would become Orthodox, or preferably Protestant, if encouraged by my Russian colleague or myself, or might even declare themselves Mussulmans.

As the communication was only verbal it is impossible to say whence it emanated, and this part of it would of course be disavowed. I merely mention it, in spite of its inherent improbability, in view of the belief that M. Chirkow has allowed discussion on the part of some of the Armenians and also the few Jacobites here, on the subject of admission into the Orthodox Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

No. 48.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 352.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 19, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 349 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis respecting a fight between gendarmes and insurgents on the Mush plain.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) FRANCIS STRONGE.

Inclosure in No. 48.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 14.)
Sir, *Bitlis, April 30, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to information received from Armenian sources, a conflict occurred a few days ago between gendarmes and insurgents at Alvarinj, a village in the Mush plain near Husskeui and about four hours east of Mush.

It is stated that gendarmes visited the village for the purpose of counting the animals for taxation, and, learning that there were insurgents concealed there, sent to

Mush for reinforcements. A fight ensued which lasted several hours, and at nightfall, as is so often the case, the insurgents made good their escape, but six persons of the village lost their lives. The rebels are said to be members of Kevork's band, but that Chief was not present, nor were the majority of his followers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

No. 49.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 5.)

(No. 372.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 30, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 352 of the 19th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reporting the occurrence at Hars of another and more serious encounter between the insurgents and the small mixed force of gendarmes and soldiers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 49.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 16.)
Sir, *Bitlis, May 14, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 14 of the 30th April, I have the honour to report that a further and more serious conflict occurred in the first days of May at Hars in the Mush plain between the public forces and insurgents, the latter being apparently members of Kevork's band and led by him.

As usual, the accounts which have reached Bitlis have been so conflicting that it is impossible to establish the exact facts. According to the statements of the Vali, a small body of soldiers and gendarmes entered the village, their commanding officer, Yaver Boy, disregarding the suggestion that they should await the arrival of a further force which was but a short distance behind them. On inquiring as to the hiding place of the insurgents believed to be present, the villagers pointed out certain houses, and one was entered without result; the troops then proceeding to another were suddenly attacked from behind by a number of armed men who rushed out of a third house. In the fight which ensued seven rebels were killed, and the rest escaped under cover of the growing darkness, but not until they had shot twelve men on the Government side, including a captain, two lieutenants of the army, and, I think, two sergeants of gendarmerie.

Ferid Bey admitted that his information was, as yet, incomplete, but he maintained positively that no unarmed villagers had suffered. He says that the band numbered twenty-four, so that seventeen will have escaped, and are believed to be still in the plain.

Reports from Armenian sources indicate that Kevork was the leader, with seven of his own men, and a certain number of the villagers whom he had armed. They assert that sixteen of the people of the village were killed, including some women and children, and that the place was thoroughly looted after the fight was over by the troops and by 900 Kurds who joined them.

According to one story, the soldiers would have burnt the houses but for the opposition of the Kurds, who reproached them with cowardice for not pursuing the insurgents.

There have been rumours of other similar occurrences, but none are as yet confirmed. It is also stated with more confidence that a band of forty men has lately crossed the Russian frontier and come towards Akhlat, and that another is shortly expected from Persia.

It is asserted that Kevork, who was one of the Chiefs in Sasun last year, succeeded in ambushing the battalion commanded by an officer named, I think, Hassan Agha, but well known in Mush as Kuseh Bimbashi, or the beardless major, and regarded as a capable man, and that many soldiers were then killed, and 200 rifles captured. These

arms are said to have been buried in the mountains at the time, and to have been since distributed to Kevork's supporters in a number of villages of the plain. I cannot say how much truth there may be in this story, which would, of course, be totally denied by the authorities, for they have never confessed to any serious loss in the events of last year. But it seems to be generally believed by Armenians that the insurgent leaders have been able to supply arms to a considerable number of villagers.

Unless the ultimate organizers of the Armenian revolutionary movement are misled by the analogy of Macedonia, where the conditions are totally different, if only on account of the propinquity of independent nations allied by race to the various parties hostile to Turkish rule, it is not easy to see what they hope to gain from a policy of isolated attacks on the Imperial forces. Such incidents as the one reported above, that of Alvarinj in April, and those which occurred at the end of last summer, are not likely to lead to any important result; while even if followed by the severest form of repression, with all that word can imply when used of Turkish troops, as at Sikavi (see Captain Tyrrell's despatch, printed in Blue Book No. 3 of 1904, p. 81), the provocation offered to the Government and to the Turks as a nation is so obvious that such incidents can hardly be expected to add greatly to the number of those in Europe whose sympathy would really aid the Armenian cause. On the other hand, the scale of such operations is too small to benefit the Committees if their object—as some of their supporters say—is to provoke reprisals in order to compel the intervention of Europe.

The attitude of the villagers, too, is somewhat hard to understand. Their own plea, that they are terrorized by the active insurgents and compelled to maintain and conceal them, is no doubt true in individual cases; but unless the rebels were assured of a considerable measure of sympathy they could hardly keep up this system of terrorization, and would not find recruits ready to take up arms with them, as they almost certainly do.

Thus the rebels from outside by provoking this incident, and the villagers by harbouring them and so allowing their village to become its scene, have brought upon Hars the following results: the plunder of the village, including probably the oxen, just at seed-time, when most needed; the consequent loss of any food supplies there may have been and great injury to the prospects of the next crop; the obligation of maintaining for days—or, perhaps, weeks—a body of troops in the houses of the villagers; and, if the story told by their neighbours is true, the death of sixteen of their number, besides the consequences in taxation and otherwise sure to result from the fact that the Government must now regard them as open rebels: while the Committees have only such satisfaction as may be gained by inflicting on the Turks the loss of three officers and nine—or, as they say, seventeen—men, and the addition of one item to the list of what, according to the point of view, will be termed "incidents" or "atrocities."

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

No. 50.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 381.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, June 3, 1905.

I HAVE of late been obliged on several occasions to complain to the Grand Vizier of the anti-British attitude adopted by the authorities of the Vilayets of Bagdad and Bussorah, and having received indirect information that the Valis of these provinces were bent on obstructing the working of the Tigris and Euphrates Navigation Company's steamers, I particularly cautioned the Porte of the consequences of any illegal action in this direction.

In conversation with me the day before yesterday, the Grand Vizier referred to my complaints, and said that, in consequence of them, he had caused instructions to be sent to both provinces warning the officials not to give credence and circulation to unauthenticated rumours inimical to England, and not to raise difficulties or throw obstacles in the way of British shipping and commerce. His Highness admitted also that the Vali of Bagdad was not competent to discharge his duties efficiently, and intimated that he hoped that before long he might be removed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 51.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 388.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, June 6, 1905.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 155 of the 9th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo respecting the statements contained in the letter of the Central Hentchakist Committee of the 20th March in regard to the alleged intention of the Ottoman authorities to remove the Zeitounlis to the Caza of Bazardjik, which was forwarded to him for a report.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 51.

Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 21.)
Sir,

Aleppo, May 29, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Marling's despatch of the 15th instant forwarding a letter from the Central Hentchakist Committee to the Marquess of Lansdowne, in which there is a statement to the effect that the Ottoman authorities are taking measures to force the Zeitounlis to leave their homes, and in returning that letter I beg to inform your Excellency that I find no confirmation of such a statement in reports which I have received from the American missionaries much more recently than the letter from the Hentchakist Committee.

On the contrary, Mr. Macallum, who frequently visits Zeitoun and sends me a report after his return, invariably expresses his opinion that the Zeitounlis have very little reason for complaint, and he attributes this satisfactory state of things to the common sense and humanity of Ishsin Bey, the Commander of the Garrison.

This officer has been in command at Zeitoun for about four years, and I have already had occasion to bring his character and services to your Excellency's notice in my despatch No. 43 of the 5th October, 1904.

I have, however, this day written to Mr. Macallum to communicate to him the specific statement of the Committee that notice had been given to the Zeitounlis that they would be removed *en masse* to the Caza of Bazardjik, and to request him to ascertain on what foundation the statement is made. I have also brought the matter to the notice of my French colleague, who alone has an official Representative in that part of the vilayet.

Mr. Catoni will report to your Excellency the result of these inquiries.

As regards the guns mentioned in the letter from the Hentchakist Committee, two, not three, were forwarded to Zeitoun early in October last.

I have, at the moment of closing this despatch, received your Excellency's telegram upon this subject, to which I am about to reply in the above sense.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 52.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 390.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, June 6, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum, reporting that the Armenian Chief Antranig is in Europe, and that he and other revolutionary leaders on the Continent are threatening prominent people with a view to obtaining their support.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 52.

Acting Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 17. Confidential.)

Erzeroum, May 26, 1905.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that I heard the Acting French Vice-Consul tell the Vali last night that he had been informed from Paris that the Armenian Chief Antranig was in Europe, and that he and other revolutionary leaders on the Continent were now threatening prominent people with a view to obtaining their support; and that, I presume in consequence of this, he had been instructed to procure a photograph of the former.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. SHIPLEY.

No. 53.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 391.)

Constantinople, June 6, 1905.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 338 of the 15th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting that the Vali has received instructions from the Central Government to draw £T. 2,000 from the local bank, and to apply it to relief purposes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 53.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 22.)

Van, May 20, 1905.

Sir,

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 6th April, stating that the Central Government was forwarding money for relief in this district, I have the honour to report that the Vali informed me this morning that he had just been instructed to draw 2,000 liras (£T. 2,000) from the local bank, and to apply it to relief purposes.

It appears that the money will be lent without interest to those who need it, as described in my No. 17 of the 20th April, and that the recipients will eventually be called upon to repay it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. G. TYRRELL.

No. 54.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 11.)

(No. 392.)

Constantinople, June 6, 1905.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 369 of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell, reporting on the progress which is being made with the dispatch of reinforcements to the Yêmen, and on the difficulties which the Turkish military authorities are encountering in the mobilization of the Kaisarieh division.

As far as can be judged from the reports received from the Yêmen up to the present date, neither the Imam nor the insurrectionary leaders appear to be imbued with an aggressive or conquering spirit, but rather to be seeking for some reasonable guarantee of a modicum of self-government, and immunity from excessive taxation. Had it been otherwise, it is improbable that they would have dispersed their forces, and retired to their homes for the division of the booty after the capture of Sanaa,

thereby allowing Menakha to be reinforced, and giving the Ottoman Government full opportunity to concentrate their forces, and await additional troops.

It is well to bear in mind, when considering the possible outcome of the insurrection and its extension to the Hedjaz and the Holy Places, that the Imam is a Shia, and a schismatic Moslem in the eyes of true believers, and that a war against the Caliphate under such conditions is hardly possible. The movement, however, was unwisely allowed to gain strength, owing to the want of foresight of the Grand Vizier who may possibly pay for it by losing his place.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 54.

Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 33.)

Constantinople, June 4, 1905.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that the military authorities are dissatisfied at the present course of events in the Yêmen, as, owing to the slowness of arrival of the reinforcements, the rebels appear to be gaining heart, and show a tendency to spread their influence northward, through the Assir country into Hedjaz and the Moslem Holy Places. It is now the hot season on the Red Sea coast, and reinforcements arriving have to wait animal transport at Hodeida, before they can move up country, and consequently suffer much from the climate, fever, and dysentery.

I hear from persons who have seen the Anatolian reinforcements embarking at Smyrna that the men were quite dispirited at the prospect of facing the climate and privations of Yêmen, and were disheartened even at starting.

A few days ago orders were given to mobilize the Kaisarieh Redif Division for service in Yêmen, which means the withdrawal of 14,000 more men from the 1st Constantinople corps.

The state of progress of the various reinforcements is as follows :—

Yanina Nizam Brigade (already arrived and now at Menakha)	..	..	..		4,000
Isbarta Relief Brigade (left Smyrna 11th to 19th May)	..	..	..	6,400	
Durazzo Detachment (left the Adriatic, 13th May)	..	..	..	2,000	
Rize Redif Brigade (left Trebizond, 16th to 21st May)	..	..	..	6,400	
					14,800
Angora Redif Division (now being mobilized)	..	..	..	..	14,000
Malatia Redif Brigade (now being mobilized)	..	..	..	..	6,400
Kharput Redif Brigade (now being mobilized)	..	..	..	..	6,400
Kaisarieh Redif Division (now being mobilized)	..	..	..	..	14,000
Total reinforcements ordered since the fall of Sanaa	...	..			59,600

From this it will be seen that some 15,000 men embarked between the 11th and the 21st May, and should now be arriving at Hodeida, although it is impossible to determine the exact length of the voyage, owing to delays in the Suez Canal for payment of the dues.

Some have already arrived, and have experienced considerable difficulty in landing at such a bad port.

The Government are negotiating to obtain a tug and some barges ("sambuks") from the Sanitary Service at Kuniaran to assist in the landing.

The question has also arisen of providing transport to move the troops up to Menakha, across the coast plain and through the hills, a distance of 100 miles.

The local Arabs seem to have withdrawn all their animals, and to sympathise with the rebels.

The Rize Brigade took 300 animals on board, and the others on an average of 35 per battalion, but many have died on the voyage, and, in any case, the number was insufficient.

The Commander of the expedition, Mushir Ahmed Feizi Pasha is still on his way to Hodeida.

The mobilization of the Angora Division is proceeding very slowly, and the Railway Company has as yet received no orders to move the men down to Smyrna.

The Malatia and Kharput men have a long march to the coast, even when mobilized, which is not yet complete.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL, *Military Attaché.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 54.

TABLE shewing Embarkation of Reinforcements for Yémen.

Regiment.	Battalion.	Steamer.	Date of Embarkation.
	Rize Redif Brigade.		
53rd	IV. Biyuk Liman	Taif	5th May, Trebizond
	I. Trebizond	Hodeida	10th ,, ,,
	II. Platana	,, ...	10th ,, ,,
	III. Surmene	,, ...	10th ,, ,,
54th	II. Majavil	Mecca	17th ,, ,,
	IV. Atina	,, ...	17th ,, ,,
	I. Rize	Abdul Kader	21st ,, ,,
	III. Ofi	,, ...	21st ,, ,,
Durazzo and Tirana Detachments ..		Nigri Novogord* and Sari	15th ,, Durazzo
	Isbarta Redif Brigade.		
27th	I. Isbarta	Assir, Les Andes*, and Bithynie*	14th to 19th May, Smyrna.
	II. Egherdir		
	III. Burdur		
	IV. Yhuborlu		
28th	I. Akshehr		
	II. Yalovach		
	III. Ilghin		
	IV. Beyshehr		
700 details ..	Konia recruits	Africa	19th May, Smyrna.

* These vessels are hired transport. The remainder belong to the Mahsussé Government Service.
The battalions embarked 750 to 800 strong.

No. 55.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 19.)

(No. 398.)
My Lord, *Therapia, June 14, 1905.*

WITH reference to Mr. Consul Crow's despatch No. 16, Secret and Confidential, of the 22nd April last, sent under flying seal to your Lordship, I have the honour to report that telegrams which I have received within the last four days from His Majesty's Consul-General in Baghdad indicate that an alarming condition of unrest prevails among the tribes inhabiting the regions along the lower parts of the Tigris and Euphrates.

At Hindiah, near Hillah, the Kurout tribe resisted by force of arms an attempt made by the local authorities, with support of 100 cavalry under an officer, to collect taxes from them, and in a night attack subsequently made by the Turkish force lost nine killed and some wounded. On the following day the tribes took the offensive, and drove the Turks to Tulegiij, which they proceeded to besiege.

In this predicament the Turks were driven to requesting the intervention of Siud Mahomet Kazivini of Hillah, who induced the Arabs to withdraw, but the tribes are still in revolt.

Another incident has been the firing by Arabs on the Turkish steamer "Ressifa" between Baghdad and Bussorah. The culprits are believed to be the Shamartoga tribe, and Major Newmarch reports that Mahomet Pasha Daghestani is said to have been instructed to inflict punishment on them.

Serious fighting is expected in the Nejef district, where a quarrel about some land near Kufa, near the north-east extremity of the lake, has already led to bloodshed between the local tribes and the Khazail Arabs. Three persons have been killed and two wounded. Other tribes are taking sides in the quarrel, and the affair may become serious.

Major Newmarch also reports that the Kurds and Arabs near Sulimanieh, in the eastern part of the Mosul Vilayet, are said to be rebellious.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 56.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 19.)

(No. 406: Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, June 12, 1905.*

EARLY last autumn Sir William Willcocks passed through Constantinople on his way to Bagdad, and spent the winter in studying a scheme of irrigation of Mesopotamia between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, a summary of which by Mr. Mark Sykes, taken from the pamphlet which he has published (of which I inclose a copy), is sent herewith.

Unfortunately Sir William communicated the result of his studies and investigations to some of the Consuls at Bagdad, as well as to other people, and sent a copy of his pamphlet to the Director of the Bagdad Railway, Dr. Zander, although I had impressed upon him the importance of not confiding the result of his studies to any one until we saw how the question shaped itself later on, and whether any British financial group would be willing to take up the matter.

I have no doubt that both the German and French Consuls sent a report to their Governments embodying the plans and proposals of Sir William, and I heard a short time ago that a Frenchman had come out here in connection with a scheme of a similar kind, and was seeking for a concession from the Sultan.

I believe that the King of Italy has been also interested in the scheme, and that he is anxious to have full information, with a view to seeing what chances it offers for Italian enterprise in those parts.

I had enjoined discretion upon Sir William Willcocks when I saw him last summer, but I am afraid this is a quality foreign to his character, and I know that he holds the opinion that he does not care in the least who carries out his plans provided they are executed, though he would be willing to give a preference to a British Syndicate.

Finding the Sultan last Friday in a very gracious and conversational mood, I took the opportunity of enlisting His Majesty's interest in the scheme, which I described as one for reclaiming the waste or marshy tracts of Lower Mesopotamia by means of a main canal from Fahga to Bagdad, and a canal parallel to the Euphrates joined up by a series of subsidiary canals, by which a territory of some 640,000 acres would be restored to cultivation, and thus provide for an enormous additional population, while adding proportionately to the wealth and prosperity of the country. I further briefly developed some other main features of the scheme based on a Memorandum, of which I also inclose a copy.

His Majesty expressed himself pleased with the idea, the importance of which he seemed fully to appreciate, and asked me to furnish him with a brief summary of these proposals in Turkish.

At the same time His Majesty observed that, however excellent the idea in itself might be, it was not possible for him to form a definite opinion until he was in possession of more particulars. An undertaking of this magnitude demanded the employment of a large capital, involving the formation of a Company, and it would be only possible to judge whether or not the scheme promised to be advantageous to the State when the conditions and terms proposed by the Company were known. His Majesty added, however, that he would be pleased to give the matter his best consideration.

Sir William Willcocks is leaving for London to-morrow, and I have advised him to call at the Foreign Office before making inquiries, with a view to seeing whether any serious British financiers are prepared to take up the project and to put their proposals into a definite and practical shape and form.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 56.

Brief Précis of Sir W. M. Willcocks' Report on the Irrigation of Mesopotamia.

I.—Preliminary.
II.—Area.
III.—Rivers.
IV.—Condition of country.
V.—Climate.
VI.—Agricultural possibilities.
VII.—Labour.
VIII.—General Schemes.
IX.—Particular Projects.
X.—Cost of same.
XI.—Remarks.
Maps.

Preliminary.

THE essential difference between Mesopotamian and Egyptian schemes of irrigation lies in the fact that the Nile is a river that inundates its banks during August and October, while the Tigris and Euphrates are in flood in March, April, and May. Thus the Nile recedes during a cool season, while the Mesopotamian floods subside just when the burning heats of summer commence, with torrid days and dewless nights, to parch the soil. Consequently Mesopotamia requires perennial irrigation, as opposed to the basin system.

Area under consideration.

The district affected by the proposed irrigation schemes is that country bounded on the north by Ana and Tekrit and the Persian Gulf on the south.

Rivers within the Area.

The Euphrates.—This river flows past Musayab, Hilla, and Diwania. A little below Musayab it turns into the Hindia Canal, the Hindia barrage (a stone weir 230 metres long) has failed to arrest the silting up of the Euphrates past Babylon and Hilla, consequently the true Euphrates is dry during August, September, and October, and almost dry in winter. At Kurna it flows into the Tigris, after being rejoined by the diverted waters from the Hindia Canal.

The maximum discharge = 3,000 cubic metres per second in April.
The minimum discharge = 300 cubic metres per second in October.
At Musayab, width = 250 metres.

Tigris.—From Tekrit to Amara the Tigris is a fine river, but between Amara and Kurna the cuts and overflows into the swamps reduce it by much of its volume until Kurna is passed, where much of the water returns from the marshes.

Width of Tigris = 300 metres.
Flood rise = 6 metres.
Maximum discharge = 5,000 cubic metres per second in April.
Minimum discharge = 250 cubic metres per second in October.

Adhem River.—Flows into the Tigris from the Hamrin Hills. Since the turning of the Adhem River dam its canals have ceased to irrigate.

Discharge = 250 cubic metres per second.

Dyala.—Flows into the Tigris a little below Baghdad. It feeds numerous canals, and its waters are utilized in winter and autumn.

Discharge = 500 cubic metres per second.

Kerkha.—Flows into the swamps east of Kurna, finally entering the Bussorah River by the Shaub mouth, east of Gurna.

Karun.—Flows into the Bussorah River at Mohammera, carrying with it much rich mud.

Bussorah.—This river is formed of the combined waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, and runs from their point of junction at Kurna. While passing through the swamps the waters lose their rich mud, but is supplied with this fertilizing medium from the Karun. The inflowing sea tide distributes the mud up the Bussorah River, above the point of influx of the Karun.

N.B.—If the Karun was in any way diverted, the loss of mud would be severely felt by cultivators along the Bussorah River.

THE Country has been divided into 15 Sections of a Total Area of 5,610,000 hectares.

Table of Sections.

No.	No. of Hectares.	Name.	Remarks.
1	270,000	Tekrit Samarra	Grassy steppes traversed by heads of old Nahrwan Canal.
2	120,000	Adhem River	Desert in summer.
3	210,000	Dyala River	Lacks drainage, but irrigated, produces wheat, barley, and dates.
4	270,000	Baghdad–Ctesiphon	In days of the Khalifate a garden, now very little cultivated.
5	900,000	Hai	Formerly traversed by many canals, was the granary of Baghdad; to-day hardly irrigated, but lands fertile where watered.
6	450,000	Ali Garbi–Ali Sharki	Immense flocks graze and wheat grown; liable to floods from Tigris.
7	600,000	Amara	Same as No. 6, but greater wheat area.
8	120,000	Hit	Irrigated by charads, worked by horses and ponies.
9	300,000	Baghdad–Sakeia	Formerly traversed by great canals and densely populated, now sparsely populated, and ancient canals reduced to small streams.
10	300,000	Babylon–Hilla	Formerly traversed by many canals with barrages, now declining owing to drying up of Euphrates; very little cultivation.
11	360,000	Hindia	New section, now populated and cultivated by immigrants from the drying up Euphrates: population increasing.
12 13 14	}		All swamps.
15	450,000	Bussorah	Formerly irrigated 4 leagues from river, now only 4 kilom.; this contains, however, 8,000,000 date trees.

Climate.

Sir John Eliot states:—

Six months cold weather, 8½-inches rainfall.
" hot " rainfall nil.
Rainfall: 1899 3½-inches. 1901 — 1½-inches. 1902 — 7-inches.

Agricultural Possibilities.

Mr. C. P. Foulon, Khed. Agric. Soc., states:—

1. Soil rich in potash, nitrogen, and phosphate; very rich in lime.
2. All cereal and leguminous crops will flourish.
3. Soil seems well suited to cotton, if irrigated well.
4. Sugar cane doubtful.

Labour.

Bagdad authorities consider Kurds from the northern hills will be ample for all requirements.

General Schemes.

By aid of weirs, sections 4, 9, 5, and 10 could easily be taken in hand. It is especially necessary in the case of sections 7 and 6, as the Tigris from Kout to Kurna should be trained and saved from obliteration, as, if the river vanishes in the swamps, the whole country round Bagdad will be ruined. The swamps might easily be reclaimed, and as the water therein is sweet, it would be profitable for irrigation.

Particular Projects.

No. I, Section 4.—It being impossible to reconstruct the old Narawan Canal, it is proposed to construct a very solid weir, or two weirs, in the vicinity of Nimrud.

From this weir, three canals could be taken :—

1. By the site of Opis.
2. Southwards towards Akr Kuf, west of Bagdad.
3. A middle canal crossing the Tigris by syphon near Jedaida, proceeding east of Bagdad, crossing the Dyala by syphon, going south of Ctesiphon.

No. II, Section 9.—Section 9 requires a weir near Faluja, below the head of the Abu Goraib Canal, and two canals led off :—

1. An irrigation and navigation canal.
2. The other to go direct to Musayab. This would protect the country from floods, and fill the ancient canals which irrigated the banks of the Tigris.

Estimated Cost of Schemes I and II.

Scheme No. I.—

	£
Cost of 257,000 hectares reclaimed .. .. =	1,900,000
Cost of half the agricultural development of above reclaimed land	1,550,000
Estimated return to capital	774,000 per annum.

Scheme No. II.—

	£
Cost of 183,000 hectares reclaimed	1,890,000
Cost of half the agricultural development	1,100,000
Return	552,000 per annum.

Remarks.

Government advantages :—

1. Increased population and taxes.
2. Settling of hill Kurds on the land, who are now almost independent—viz., increased recruiting-ground for the army, increased profits to Régie, increased traffic, &c.

Advantages to private landowners :—

It is estimated that any land within the zone of schemes would yield an increase of tenfold on almost any given acre.

Note.—Kurd immigrants would be believers in the Khalifhate, the South Mesopotamian Arabs are not.

Topographical Section General Staff, No 2076

War Office July, 1905

Inclosure 2 in No. 56.

Memorandum laid before the Sultan on Friday, June 9, and subsequently translated into Turkish and forwarded to the Palace.

BAGDAD–SELUCIA Section.

The scheme consists in placing a weir at Faluja, and leading of two canals—the first a navigation and irrigation canal joining the Euphrates with Bagdad, the second to go straight to Musayab, down the Euprates. This would fill the ancient canals and irrigate the whole district lying between the canal and the Tigris.

By this scheme 640,000 acres would be reclaimed at a cost of 1,900,000*l.* on canal works, and 1,550,000*l.* on agricultural development, levelling drainage, &c., making a total outlay of 3,450,000*l.*

In four years from the commencement of operations, a nett return of 774,000*l.* per annum would be expected, or 22½ per cent. on the money spent.

20,000 workmen would be engaged on the work; if 10,000 of these were soldiers, as on the Hejaz Railway, a saving of half-a-million would be insured.

The present population is 25,000 souls. If land is to be cultivated, 160,000 would be required. There is little doubt that the hill Kurds of Soliemanie and the Mosul districts would flock to the region in sufficient numbers.

Forming a magnificent population of loyal subjects of the Sultan, industrious and capable, devoted to the Khalipiate, and a strong bulwark against the disloyal and turbulent influence of the Arabs.

There need be no fear of European predominance in the district, for in India, after the building of the Chenab Canal, the Government settled 800,000 Sikhs on its banks—once desert, now flourishing country.

No. 57.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 19.)

(No. 407.)

My Lord, *Therapia, June 12, 1905.*

ALTHOUGH I found the Sultan in a very talkative humour last Friday, and ready to discuss any subject from Sherlock Holmes' tales, which he said he had read with the greatest interest, to the latest incident in the Russo-Japanese war, I had considerable difficulty in getting His Majesty to discuss the subject of the prolongation of the Smyrna–Aidin Railway, about which he had issued an unfavourable Iradé on the previous Monday in connection with the Mazbata of the Council of Ministers, which was probably dictated by the Palace and the strong German interest there, who oppose our demand to the best of their power. The substance of the Iradé was to the effect that as it is shown by the Report of the Minister of Public Works, annexed to the Mazbata of the Council of Ministers, that this extension would be disadvantageous to the Imperial Government, the prolongation of the term of its concession in particular involving a heavy pecuniary sacrifice on the part of the Government, which is under no obligation to grant this extension, the request of the Company cannot be granted.

The decision of the Council of Ministers was opposed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of the Interior, but was strongly advocated by the Grand Vizier, who, in this as well as in most other matters, is pledged to support German interests. Unfortunately, neither of the Ministers refused actually to indorse the decision or insisted on withholding their signature, and the document went up to the Sultan as an unanimous decision of the Council.

I told the Sultan that I had found that the Grand Vizier had a *parti pris* in regard to this question, that the late decision of the Council seemed most inequitable in view of the various concessions given to other Powers all over the Empire, and that I could not desist from pressing for a favourable solution of this question.

I tried very hard but I could not extract from His Majesty an assurance that he would accede to our demand, even in principle. I did, however, succeed in getting a promise that His Majesty would himself examine the grounds on which the decision of the Council of Ministers was based, and I have since received a message from the Palace saying that His Majesty wishes to have a report on the question from me, which I hope to present in the course of a few days. It must necessarily be little more than an epitome of those which I have presented already, but I shall enlarge somewhat

more upon the general grounds and policy of the Concession, and if your Lordship has an opportunity of telling Musurus Pasha to telegraph that you insist upon British interests not being treated in a less friendly manner than those of other Powers, and that you must press for a satisfactory solution of this question, I have no doubt it will be far more effectual than anything I can say or do.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 58.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 19.)

(No. 114.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, June 14, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith, copy of a despatch from Colonel Maunsell, Military Attaché to this Embassy, on the distribution of troops in the Bagdad Corps.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 58.

Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 36.)
Sir, *Constantinople, June 12, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the present distribution of the VIth or Bagdad Corps is made over a very extended area, and the occupation of the Kassim province of Nejd has necessitated the withdrawal of a large part of the ordinary garrisons of the Bagdad and Mosul vilayets.

In the Kassim district there are now in garrison at Hail, Boreida, and Anéiza, 3,000 infantry (seven battalions) of the VIth Corps, in addition to 2,000 men of the Hejaz Division, who marched over from Medina.

At the Gul Wagsa Oasis, on the road between Nejef and Kassim, to keep open communications, is a force of 920 men (two battalions).

Along the Euphrates, in support of these, are two cavalry regiments (920 men) at Hilla, and 300 men of the Kerbela Redifs.

One battalion of 470 men is at Diwanie.

Two battalions (935 men) are at Nasirie, to overawe Sadun Pasha and the Muntifik tribes.

In and near Bussorah are 1,115 men and a field battery.

On the Persian Gulf coast are three battalions (1,150 men) in El Hofhuf, capital of the Hasa province, with small posts in the neighbourhood. One battalion of 480 men are at Katif, on the coast, and another, of the same strength, dispersed in small garrisons in the Katar Peninsula, making a total of 2,420 men on the Persian Gulf coast of Hasa and Katar.

In Bagdad itself is only one infantry battalion of 570 men, mounted on mules, and eight squadrons of cavalry.

As will be seen from the attached sketch map, these troops cover a very wide extent of country, 600 miles from north to south, while those in Kassim and Hasa are entirely separated from the rest, and could not well be withdrawn.

Although the expedition of Ahmed Feizé Pasha has so far proved successful, there was no second fighting, Ibn Saoud withdrawing and tendering his submission; still the military authorities here look on the situation with distrust, do not believe Ibn Saoud's protestations of friendship, and expect further trouble.

In the northern part of the country, scattered widely over the Mosul vilayet, are the remaining fourteen battalions of this Corps, each acting as a garrison in some Kurdish district.

Kirkuk and Suleimanieh have five battalions, and three are on the Persian frontier.

In Mosul is a battalion with a cavalry regiment; also a detached battalion in Sinjar to watch the Yezidis there.

In the last few years the Kurdish element in the Mosul vilayet has been gaining

strength, and numbers several powerful confederations which might give the Government considerable trouble if circumstances caused them to unite.

One of the principal of these is the confederation of Arab and Kurd tribes under Ibrahim Pasha, of Viranshehr, a natural leader of men, whose rise has been rapid in the last few years, and who continues to extend his power eastward, towards Mosul. Last year he subdued the Karagechi Kurds near Diarbekr, and now he is spreading his influence over the powerful Arab tribe of Shammar, who have long been paramount in the country west of Mosul. One section of the tribe has already joined him, and although recently he has been defeated in an effort to subdue the rest, he will probably succeed, as he has done with the Karagechi.

I attach an account, by Captain Sykes, of a visit last April to Ibrahim Pasha, in which he describes the present state of tribal politics and the personality of Ibrahim Pasha himself.

A sketch map done by him also shows, in green, the large extent of country covered by his confederation.

Should he manage to bring in the Shammar and consolidate himself on the west bank of the Tigris, he will find on the far bank of the river the Girdi Kurds, near Erbil, and the Hamawand stretching down to Suleimanieh, who might become powerful allies on his side if the opportunity offered. The horsemen of the Hamawand are among the finest light cavalry I have seen, while the Erbil Kurds are bold and turbulent, and the Jsie Kurds, inhabiting the country between the two Zabs, are also warlike.

In the mountains to the north, the Miran confederation, since the death of Mustafa Pasha two years ago, has lost its influence, and has partly broken up.

The Hartoshi, under Hajji Agha, are a powerful collection of nomads who go for the summer to the mountains south of Lake Van, but do not enter the Mosul country except for a short time in the winter.

On the Persian frontier are the tribes under Sheikh Sadik, who form a powerful band, but who scarcely influence the Mosul Plain.

Near Zakho are the confederations of Yusuf Agha and Abdi Agha, which include many small tribes along the foot of the hills there.

There appears to be more unrest than usual in Mesopotamia, as besides the quarrel of Ibrahim Pasha with the Shammar and the local disturbances which it creates, the Hamawand Kurds round Suleimanieh have again commenced to give trouble to the Government. The Arabs along the Tigris and Euphrates continue to be restless, as tribal quarrels continue near Amara on the Tigris, and near Kufa on the Euphrates, while Sadun Pasha, of the Muntifik, is constantly giving trouble. With so many restless and discontented elements, it is not difficult to suppose the effect of a spread of the successful revolt in the Yemen in the form of a general Arab revival.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL, *Lieutenant-Colonel, Military Attaché.*

[Two Maps, not reproduced.]

Inclosure 2 in No. 58.

A Report on Ibrahim Pasha, and the present state of Western Mesopotamia.

[The photographs accompanying this Report are not reproduced.]

BEFORE describing the present condition of the country, which lies in the triangle formed by Diabekr and Deir Zor on one side, Suverek and Diabekr on the second, and the line of the Euphrates on the third, it is necessary to go back to the years 1876-77-78, at which time the Anazeh and the Shammar tribes practically held supreme power over the country; their plundering expeditions reached as far north as Diabekr in summer, and their normal camping grounds extended up to Suverek. The Turkish Government was very weak, and only maintained its sway, even in name, owing to the fierce quarrel which existed between the two tribes, a feud which pre-

vented them spreading beyond the district, and acted as a kind of brake on their further advance.

The smaller Kurdish and Arab nomad tribes in the district bowed to the superior forces of the Bedowins, and lived on sufferance, that is to say, they gave the Anazeh and Shammar Sheikhs a wide berth when they approached, and were always extremely civil when they met, invariably yielding to the Bedowin on any controversial matter of grazing or water. The village dwelling Berasieh (Kurds) who inhabit the 360 odd villages around Seruj, alone maintaining complete independence.

The villagers between Urfa and the river, who were not of that tribe, led a rather miserable existence, which, however, they accepted as their lot; the same may be said of the bastard Kurd-Arab fellaheen, who live in the miserable villages between Harran and Urfa, at the foot of the Jebel Tek-Tek.

It must be remembered that in those days the sword and lance were practically the only weapons used, except the flint-lock charged with a mixture called powder, which, when lighted, often produced sufficient explosive gas to propel a bullet some distance beyond the muzzle of the gun.

However, in the early eighties, a man named Ibrahim Agha, or Sheikh Ibrahim, became Chief of the Milli confederation of Kurds, a small tribe who lived on sufferance at the foot of the Karaja Dagh.

This individual had spent much of his life among the Shammar and Anazeh, his father had been a pure Kurd of good family and his mother an Arab.

His life had been adventurous, he had seen much fighting, and had travelled far, even to Egypt and Constantinople. Although he could neither read nor write he had assimilated much of the mental culture of the Arab nomads, and had argued with the learned men in the madressehs at Cairo. It was not long before he began to give proofs of his ability and foresight; his first act was to make firm friends with the sturdy little colony of Circassians at Ras-ul-Ain; he then proceeded to gather under his dominion the lesser Sheikhs of the surrounding tribes and to part them from their own people, securing parties of 100 and 200 tents at a time.

So well did he manage his diplomacy that, before many years had passed, the Milli Kurds began to present a far more powerful front than they did formerly. And yet all this was brought about by craft and intrigue, and the progress was almost imperceptible to the Arabs, who were occupied almost entirely with their own bickerings and feuds.

Ibrahim's policy consisted in being friendly to the strong, conciliating the weaker and bullying only the weakest.

About this time a great event took place, Ibrahim among other Kurdish Chiefs was enrolled in the Hamidieh and, after visiting Constantinople, was promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General and given the rank of Pasha.

After this his policy grew bolder; he began to resist the Anazeh and Shammar; he often drove them back and cleared his district of their war parties. He encouraged Christians (Armenians and Chaldeans) to take refuge in the vicinity of Viranshehr; he established a bazaar in that town, which rapidly increased in size; he gained over the powerful Arab tribe of the Jafs by marrying the sister of the Sheikh. The Mafdli, Baggara, and Sherabin followed; the Chichekli Kurds in the vicinity of Mardin joined also; but the Tai, Jibbur, Anazeh, and Shammar now became his mortal enemies.

To such a politician as Ibrahim this solid block of enemies was too dangerous to be left untouched. Profiting, therefore, by a long-standing feud between two parties of the Shammar, the Pasha gained over, by wheedlings, bribes, and oratory, the great Sheikh Jarrallah, who commanded 1,500 tents.

Meanwhile, the Pasha's riches increased with his power; the growing importance of Virnnshehr brought caravan traffic into his dominions. Formerly it had always been taken for granted by nomads that a caravan was a legitimate object of plunder or blackmail, but in Ibrahim's case the caravans were bringing in wealth and prosperity to his town of Viranshehr and, indirectly, money, butter, and commodities to his own camps. His view of caravans completely altered. Not so, however, the Karagetch, who eyed the progress made by the Milli Kurds with no great favour. Now all caravans to Virnnshehr, whether from Diabekr or Urfa, had to pass through the territory of this tribe, who invariably plundered the passengers with great freedom.

In 1901 Ibrahim Pasha protested. His protests were disregarded. He requested the Governor of Urfa to keep order. The Governor prevaricated, and Ibrahim Pasha took the field in person against the Karagetch. It is the customary policy of the Turkish Government to interfere in tribal quarrels when there is a probability of a decisive action.

On this occasion a Captain and fifteen mounted infantry were sent to separate the combatants. They came upon Ibrahim and his forces in the vicinity of Suverek. The officer ordered the Chief to retire to his own country. Ibrahim refused. High words ensued. The Captain was shot dead, his men disarmed, and sent back to Urfa, while the Milli Kurds proceeded to engage with their enemies.

In a short time the Karagetch were completely defeated, and their tents and baggage carried off to Viranshehr. They were obliged to sue for terms, and engaged not to interfere any more with caravans. To confirm this two marriages were arranged between nieces and nephews of the two contracting Chiefs, and Ibrahim returned to the Karagetch, not only the captured stores, but also much more than he had taken, while, to conciliate the authorities for the death of the officer, a caravan of 500 camel loads of butter was dispatched to the Sultan at Constantinople.

It was at this time that everybody thought that Ibrahim's power was trembling in the balance, and all imagined that his days of favour were ended. He had struck down a son of the Sultan; every zaptieh and soldier was thirsting for his blood. It needed only a word, and every armed man in the district who was serving, or who had served in the army, was ready to march against him.

When with amazing boldness Ibrahim came to Urfa, to the centre of the Government, to spend the latter days of Ramazan, by special wire from Constantinople he was entertained, his enemies, who a few days before had been expecting his downfall, were stricken with influenza and remained unwell until the Pasha had departed with his train of followers, after spending some days in the city.

The Pasha's policy now consists only in raiding such villages as are under the domination of those who are neither his friends or allies, such as the Berazieh, in the hope that they will accept his rule; while he does not spare Moslems under the Government, he seldom hurts Christians.

He has spies in every town in the district, and in his camp has established a refuge for robbers and evil-doers on condition that they behave themselves in his district.

To complete this record I might give some account of a visit which I lately paid to the Pasha himself.

I found his encampment near the foot of Jebel-Abd-ul-Azziz; on reaching the limits of the ground I was met by an Agha, who led me into a gigantic tent supported on over 100 poles, measuring 1,500 square yards of cloth.

Coming from the glare of the mid-day sun it was at first difficult to distinguish anything clearly in the recesses of this vast tabernacle, but I presently noticed that at the farther end about 150 men were standing around a person seated on a low divan, this was the Pasha himself.

He immediately rose to greet me; on seeing my face he started violently, hesitated, and then shook me warmly by the hand. He then led me to the divan, which stood before a camel-dung fire, on which stood the usual number of coffee pots.

The Pasha is a tall slimly-built man, his face is purely Kurdish, having a large lumpy nose, rather piercing inquisitive eyes, a fairly high forehead, and a large mouth.

In repose his face has a somewhat sinister expression, being fixed in that settled frown common to all tent dwellers who live in a sunlit desert. This grim and thoughtful look is not lessened by a swordcut under the eye, which causes the lower lid to droop. In conversation, however, his continual smile is open and pleasing and his manner almost genial; his hands and feet, in curious contrast to his face, are extremely small and delicately formed.

In the course of conversation he showed a wonderfully accurate knowledge of the affairs of Europe, England's relations with Ireland, and other matters which point to other sources of information than can be generally culled from Turkish newspapers of which of course he has a plentiful supply.

The crowd of people who surrounded him were persons of every creed and race in Turkey, mostly visiting on business, either in settlement of quarrels, litigation, taxes, business, sales of butter, wool, cloths, and other affairs in which the Pasha is interested.

A list of those to whom I spoke, taken at random, will give some idea of their diversity—

1. A Yezedi (devil-worshipper) converted to Islam.
2. A Turkish doctor attached to the Pasha's staff—an exile.
3. A Hamawand—ex zaptieh—robbed the Alexandretta mail of 2,000 mejidis, sentenced to 150 years' imprisonment, dug a tunnel out of the prison and joined the Pasha.
4. A robber who had murdered four men and a woman near Aleppo.
5. An Armenian Kawuji, bearer of a present of camels from the Karagotch.
6. A robber, whom I myself captured two years previously near Nisibin, now a merchant.

7. A Shammar Arab, who came to report the settling of a blood feud among Jarullah's men.

8. A Haideranli Hamidieh from Van.

9. A Circassian Bey in attendance.

The Pasha excused the presence of the less respectable of these men, saying that the desert law obliges him to protect refugees who seek his hospitality. This is true enough, and he finds the observance convenient; for those whose lives are forfeit must stand or fall by their protector, and form a desperate bodyguard. On the other hand, it must be admitted that these fellows behave well enough in the Pasha's own borders. The following day the Pasha gave orders to strike camp and move.

The whole of the baggage train, which numbered no less than 2,000 animals, was on the march in one hour and a-half from the issuing of the order, a little more being required to pitch the camp on our arrival at the next station. While on the march the Pasha rode at the head of a body of fifty horsemen of his own private staff. He was also accompanied by a pack of fifteen couple of gazelle hounds, which are hunted by his sons.

During the whole of my five days' stay with the tribe business of various kinds was continually going forward in the great tent. Horsemen with letters and despatches were always coming and going on various affairs of the desert; questions of taxation, grazing, moving of camps, feuds, assaults, robberies, village litigation, movements of enemies, imposing of fines, and even reports of spies from the neighbouring towns all come directly before the Pasha, and it was noticeable with what celerity he gave his orders and made his decisions, dictating letters to his Secretary, sealing them and handing them to the messengers.

The Pasha's present position is now secure in the direction of Urfa; the Berazieh at Seruj, however, would be ready to do him a shrewd turn if they dared, but they lack arms; the Karazileh are, as I have said, at peace.

The Anazeh seem to be holding their hand; there remains against him the Tai and Shammar, who, except the division under Sheikh Jarrallah, would kill him if they could.

The Pasha's forces may be counted at 14,000 men with perhaps 6,000 rifles among them. If when he attacks the Shammar he is assisted by the Chichichich Kurds (see map), he will have another 5,000 men to help him.

The Pasha is much more of a diplomatist than a soldier, and usually leaves the actual distribution of the order of battle to his subordinates. His men are extremely poor shots over ranges exceeding 150 yards, but are fine horsemen and when grazing is good are well mounted. He has now about 150 of his men permanently quartered in Urfa, where they figure as part of the garrison.

I might add that the common Hamidieh oath is "Before God and under the Pasha Ibrahim."

No. 59.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 198.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, June 21, 1905.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 384 of the 3rd instant, reporting the complaints you have made to the Grand Vizier with regard to the hostile attitude adopted by the authorities of the Vilayets of Bagdad and Bussorah towards British shipping and commerce.

I learn with satisfaction of the instructions which have been sent to the officials of those provinces in consequence of your representations.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 60.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 427.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, June 20, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 372 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith, copy of a further despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis on the subject of the fight between Turks and Armenians at Hars.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 60.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18.)

Sir, *Bitlis, June 4, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 16 of the 14th May, I have the honour to report that some of the women of Hars, the scene of the fight then reported, came to Bitlis this morning.

The chief features of their account are as follows:—

Kevork and his band had only arrived the night before, the 3rd May, intending to proceed eastwards. On the arrival of the troops the head man of the village went to meet them, asking that the women and children should be allowed to go before an attack was made, but he was at once shot down by order of the Colonel. They also say that none of the insurgents were killed, but sixteen men and children, and six women of the village; that after the fight every house was plundered, all movable property being carried off by the soldiers and Kurds, including the church vestments; that many women were violated, and that all the inhabitants, some ninety families, have now fled, while the village is still occupied by troops. A considerable part of their cattle escaped plunder, being out in the fields.

From other Armenian sources I hear that the presence of the band was denounced by the priest of the Armenian Catholic village of Frenk Norshou, through which they passed on their way from Mush. This priest, and as is said, the Gregorian priest of Pertag, has since been murdered, presumably in revenge for this denunciation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

No. 61.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 428.)

My Lord, *Therapia, June 20, 1905.*

WITH reference to Mr. Townley's despatch, No. 14, Confidential, of the 9th January last, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting the departure of Hikmet Bey, the son of the Vali, from that town for Constantinople.

The removal of this mischievous and unscrupulous person is satisfactory, as representations against his conduct have been made by His Majesty's Embassy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[Inclosure in No. 61.

Acting Vice-Consul Young to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, May 20, 1905.*

REFERRING to my despatch No. 33, Confidential, of the 21st December last, in which I ventured to urge the desirability of obtaining the removal of certain unscrupulous persons from this vilayet, I have now the honour to report that Hikmet Bey (the son of the Vali) has at length left Diarbekir for Constantinople. I am, so far, unable to ascertain what steps have been taken with regard to Niazi Bey and Mina Haindopoulo.

It is reported that Hikmet Bey amassed between 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.* during his unofficial stay in the vilayet. But I am not a position to vouch for the accuracy of the statement.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WILKIE YOUNG.

No. 62.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 131.)
My Lord, *Therapia, June 20, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch referring to the deplorable condition of the Provincial Treasury at Erzeroum, and its possible consequences.

Mr. Avalon Shipley says that for the year the receipts amount to £T. 250,000, and the expenditure to £T. 450,000.

The same state of things, there is only too much reason to believe, exists in many other provinces of the Empire.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 62.

Vice-Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 19.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, June 8, 1905.*

I WISH to draw your Excellency's attention once more to a matter which, though perennial in most parts of the Empire, is becoming a serious menace at the present moment to this vilayet.

I refer to the absolute lack of money. As I reported in my despatch No. 47 of 1st July, 1904, the total revenue of this vilayet is scarcely £T. 250,000, and under ordinary circumstances the total expenses amount to about £T. 300,000. This year the military expenses are estimated at £T. 350,000, so that, with the usual £T. 200,000 for civil expenses, the expenditure will amount to £T. 450,000, with a revenue of £T. 200,000 less. The Vali is absolutely at a loss to know what to do. He has been insulted continually during the last week by officers claiming their arrears, and, worse still, by women claiming their pensions. Constantinople vouchsafes no reply to his urgent appeals, excepting to ask for money for Yemen.

Erzeroum is evidently being sacrificed to other parts of the Empire, and I would venture to beg your Excellency to use your high influence in the proper quarter, with a view to easing the immediate necessities of the vilayet to be relieved.

The Vali and the military authorities are both working day and night with a view to keeping so strict a watch on the income and expenditure that not a penny should be misappropriated, and, to judge by the deep discontent among the collectors in this district, with good effect. The intrigues against the Vali have greatly hampered, if not his action, at least his influence this last year, and if money is not sent from Constantinople at once to relieve the present strain, his position will become untenable.

In some way or another £T. 100,000 over and above the ordinary income must be raised (the other £T. 100,000 may go to swell the arrears list without actual danger). If they do not come from Constantinople, they will be got in indirect and illegal ways from the population, a most regrettable alternative, since the Armenian villagers are this year disposed to abstain from revolutionary intrigue, owing to the great improvement in the protection afforded of late to their lives and property.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. SHIPLEY.

No. 63.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 133.)
My Lord, *Therapia, June 21, 1905.*

WITH reference to the account given by Mr. Sykes of the Milli Confederation of tribes under Ibrahim Pasha, which was attached to Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell's despatch No. 36, and inclosed in my despatch No. 414 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to report that I have received information from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Diarbekir of serious trouble which has broken out between Ibrahim Pasha and a division of the Shamar Arabs, south of Mardin.

It appears that two engagements have taken place, in the first of which Ibrahim Pasha's forces were defeated with loss, while, in the second, he was at least partially successful.

Mr. Wilkie Young states that it is not possible for him to give exact particulars at the present moment, but that he is informed on reliable authority that fearful devastation has been done by the combatants, that flocks have been relentlessly slaughtered, and that most of the crops in the plain have been destroyed. He also points out that this is the second year in succession that the most fertile cazas of the vilayet have suffered from the incompetence of the authorities to maintain order.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 64.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 3.)

(No. 141.)
My Lord, *Therapia, June 27, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 388 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Aleppo, reporting that the statements made by the Hentchakist Committee with regard o the removal of the Zeitounlis are unfounded, and that the affairs at Zeitoun are at present satisfactory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 64.

Acting Consul Cumni to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 28.)
Sir, *Aleppo, June 19, 1905.*

WITH reference to Mr. Consul Barnham's telegram of the 29th ultimo, and to his despatch No. 21 of the same day, I have the honour to report that, from inquiries made through the French Consul and through Mr. Macallum, it appears that there is no foundation for the statement of the Hentchakist Committee respecting the alleged removal *en masse* of the Zeitounlis to the Pazardjik Plain. No such announcement has, so far, been made to the Zeitounlis. Zeitoun is as quiet as usual, and the people

are going about their business quietly. It seems, however, that the present Kaimakam is a very inefficient man, and the people would like to have him removed. On the other hand, the Military Commander, Talsin Bey, is praised by every one for his justice and humanity.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. CATONI.

No. 65.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 3.)

(No. 444.)
My Lord,
Therapia, June 27, 1905.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 433 of the 21st instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from the Acting Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting the difficulties of the local authorities in collecting Redifs for service in the Yemen and the unsatisfactory state of affairs in the vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 65.

Acting Vice-Consul Young to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 17.)
Sir,
Diarbekir, June 14, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to report that the state of affairs in this district continues most unsatisfactory. Great efforts are evidently being made to collect troops, but it would seem the authorities were by no means sure of the strength of their position in regard to so difficult a task. Orders and counter-orders are issued with confusing rapidity, and, though a month has elapsed since the Redifs were called out, preparations for their departure are evidenced by orders for transport, commissariat, and equipment are still wanting.

The Arabic-speaking districts of Mardin, Midiat, &c. (about one-third of the vilayet) appear to be the source of much trouble in this respect. It would even seem that there is great reluctance to take men from these districts for service in the Yemen. On the other hand, their exemption is certain to create serious discontent in less fortunate parts of the vilayet.

Generally speaking, there is no enthusiasm whatever for the campaign, but much anxiety for the state of affairs here in Diarbekir. It is rumoured that the Arabs are combining for a renewed attack upon Ibrahim Pasha, and the outlook in the south, where (as previously reported) great devastation has already taken place, is disquieting.

Lawlessness is rife throughout the vilayet, and there is little security for life or property. Last week the village of Beli (ten hours from here) was raided, and two caravans, from Mosul and Aleppo respectively, were pillaged (the former with loss of life). In short, the state of affairs, of which I had the honour to inform your Excellency last year, is being repeated with added violence and destruction.

In the City of Diarbekir itself, the upshot of this effort to raise troops for service in South Arabia is awaited with anxiety. If the Redifs are really to be sent, it is to be hoped they will be sent at once, and with all the precautions for the maintenance of order throughout the district. If, on the other hand, as has been rumoured, regular troops are to be sent, and the Redifs left in garrison here, I fear that the position might at any moment become grave.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. WILKIE YOUNG.

No. 66.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 17.)

(No. 465.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, July 10, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis reporting on the recent military movements in his district, the financial condition of the vilayet, and the rumoured withdrawal of the insurgents to Russian territory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 66.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 22.)
Sir,
Bitlis, June 27, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to report that preliminary steps have been taken towards calling out the reserves of this district, but that the men have not yet been summoned to the colours. According to common rumour, five battalions of regular infantry will be sent to the Yemen and the Redifs are to take their places here. The Vali told me that some regular troops will be sent "to Diarbekir" (and I presume from thence to the Yemen, though he professed ignorance on this point), and that he has been instructed to call out Redifs if he considers it necessary for the public safety, but if he thinks that sufficiently assured by the one battalion of Nizams which will be left in Bitlis, he need not summon the reserves. When I saw him the Administrative Council was actually discussing this question, he left them in order to receive me, and I have not learnt what decision was adopted.

I asked the Governor-General what hope he had of setting in order the finances of the vilayet, now that the arrears have been cancelled, and from his reply I understood that he sees little prospect of success. He said that if it were possible to dispense with the reserves, there would be a considerable saving, as of late the garrison has been ordered to draw on the vilayet for its expenses, and a large portion of the provincial revenues has thus been taken for military necessities.

He assured me most positively that no money has been sent from here to Constantinople since he assumed the administration in March 1904, insisting that there was now to send, I have, however, good reason to think that this is not the case, but that heavy drafts have been made by the Central Government on the local treasury.

The only matter with regard to which he seemed hopeful was the pay of the gendarmerie, he said that he had been authorized to make this a first charge on the revenues, and that he hoped to be able to secure regular payment.

If Ferid Bey is really able to effect this, and having thus removed the excuse for the unlawful exactions of the Zaptiés, if he can institute some control over their conduct in the villages, he will have taken an important step towards ameliorating the state of the province, but it is to be feared that any improvement in the methods of paying the gendarmes can only be attained at the cost of other officials. I am informed that the Courts were unable to sit one day last week, as the clerks and minor officials had absented themselves as a demonstration against the irregularity of their pay, and that the intervention of the Vali, promising attention to their demands, was necessary to induce them to return to their work.

I hear from sources that I believe to be reliable that the distress among the Armenian peasantry is greater than at any period for years past, and that many villages will have greatly reduced crops, owing to the impossibility of providing seed corn; in particular, distressing accounts reach me from the district of Tadig, a few hours east of Bitlis, where there is said to be hardly any grain either for food or sowing.

I think it is certain that the area of land under cultivation is steadily diminishing, and that under these circumstances, in spite of increased pressure from the authorities and the imposition of new taxes, the revenue of the vilayet must also decline.

If, then, any considerable portion of what is received has to be paid to the military

chest, as the Vali states, and if, as I am convinced, another large part is called for at Constantinople, the local deficit cannot but increase, salaries must fall again into arrear, and there can be little hope of improvement in the condition of the officials, and consequently in their conduct or in the administration of the province.

A rumour, as yet unconfirmed, is current to the effect that the insurgent leaders have moved eastwards, and are returning to Russia in obedience to a call from the Catholicos of Echmiadzin to abandon the fruitless policy of stirring up trouble. The Catholicos is believed here to have declared that his mission to Europe last year received satisfactory promises from the Governments approached, and that he could hold out hopes of some effective reforms, if the provocation offered by the insurgents ceased.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

No. 67.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 17.)

(No. 471.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 11, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a Report drawn up by Mr. Acting Consul Catoni on the condition of the Vilayet of Aleppo during the second quarter of of the present year.

The description which Mr. Catoni gives of the state of affairs of Aleppo might be paralleled in most of the other provinces of Asiatic Turkey.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 67.

General Report by Acting Consul Catoni upon the Vilayet of Aleppo for the Quarter ending June 30, 1905.

Recall of the Vali.—The most important event which has occurred in this vilayet, during the quarter ended the 30th June was the sudden recall of the Vali, his Excellency Kiazim Bey, to Constantinople, for reasons still unknown. On leaving Aleppo his Excellency has told to his friends that his absence is only temporary, and that he was almost sure to come back in four or five weeks' time. As an evidence of this statement he has left his family here. It is supposed that his recall to Constantinople is connected with the troubles of the Yemen, in this sense, that Aleppo being an Arab town the Sultan apprehends that the influence of the revolutionary party in the Yemen might in the near future be extended in this vilayet also, and therefore His Majesty has, presumably, required the presence of Kiazim Bey in Constantinople to confer with him on the situation, and to impart to him verbal instructions accordingly.

According to another rumour, Kiazim Bey has been recalled to Constantinople to be kept there as a hostage, and this to the effect of compelling his father, Osman Pasha, Custodian (Muhafés) of Medina, to follow strictly and faithfully the Sultan's orders and views in regard to the Arab question of the Yemen.

Finally, some people say that Kiazim Bey has been ordered to proceed immediately to Constantinople, in consequence of serious charges brought against him in connection with his administration while he was Governor of Jerusalem.

The Acting Vali.—During the absence of Kiazim Bey, the Military Commander of Aleppo, his Excellency Bekir Pasha, has, by superior order, taken charge of the vilayet, but apparently he feels very uneasy with his task, seeing that the Central Government of Constantinople is pressing him by daily telegrams to purchase supplies for the troops of the Yemen for an amount of about 30,000 Turkish liras, when there is no money in hand. As a consequence of this unfortunate state of affairs, the local authorities are making use of all sorts of means, just and unjust, to raise money, the victims being always the working classes.

Crops.—The crops in general are very satisfactory this year, but the prospects of exportation are doubtful, owing to the rise of the price of transport to Alexandretta, which, from 40 to 50 piastres per kantar of 200 okes, is now at 60 up to 70. The reason is attributable to the transport of the Government's supplies for the troops of

the Yemen. In fact, the most part of the camel drivers, to avoid the customary ill-treatment of the Turkish officials, prefer to stay quietly in their villages rather than to come to town and be seized for the transport of the above supplies. Hence the comparatively few caravans of camels which run now between Aleppo and Alexandretta pretend high prices of transport, which is a serious obstacle to commerce.

Trade.—Besides the above obstacle, the trade in this vilayet suffers also considerable damage owing to the insecurity of the roads, especially between Aleppo and Bagdad. In fact, the continual depredations of the Hamidiés, Kurds, and Shammars have lately compelled the merchants of Aleppo to suspend their commercial transactions with Mosul and Bagdad. It seems the Government is unable to restore order in Mesopotamia, where, it is said, the country is practically in a state of anarchy.

Prisoners at Pyass.—The Acting Vice-Consul at Alexandretta reports that the Christian prisoners in the fortress of Pyass complain of the ill-treatment of which they are the object on the part of the officials in charge of the said prison, and beg for assistance. Very probably the same request has been addressed to the other Vice-Consuls at Alexandretta.

Administration of Justice.—Unfortunately there is no improvement to report with regard to the administration of justice in the local courts of this vilayet.

Cattle Disease.—Cattle plague prevails at present in the district of Marash, and in some villages of the Vilayet of Adana.

Public Works.—Nothing is to be noted in the line of public works during the quarter under review.

Restitution of Revolvers.—The revolvers and cartridges which were lately seized by the police in the "bazar" of Aleppo have been afterwards returned to the owners, but through "bakshish," of course.

Sanitary State.—The general health in this vilayet is, so far, satisfactory. No epidemic diseases have been heard of.

Finances.—The state of the finances of the vilayet is getting worse and worse every day. All the money they collect from taxes is sent immediately to Constantinople to meet the daily and urgent demands of the Minister of Finances. In many instances they have even been obliged to borrow money of private individuals to meet the said demands of Constantinople.

(Signed) A. CATONI.

Aleppo, June 30, 1905.

No. 68.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 1.)

(No. 490.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 24, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 338 of the 15th May, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on a recent journey in the Shattak district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 68.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 28.)
Sir, *Van, July 4, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I have lately returned from a tour through the Shattak district, whither I had gone, with your Excellency's sanction, to investigate reports received as to the state of poverty and distress prevailing in those regions.

There are seventy-six villages in the caza, exclusive of the Nahie of Norduz, which I did not visit as its population is chiefly Kurdish. The district is a very mountainous one, consisting for the most part of narrow valleys, well watered, and well wooded, but affording very small space for agricultural operations. Thus the population is less agricultural than in other parts of the vilayet, and even in times of plenty the people do not grow sufficient grain for their own consumption. At present

we may say that there is no grain in the caza, and that it is all imported. Thus every one is equally affected by the high prices prevailing in Van, to which must be added the cost of the transport to Shattak.

The staple industry of the district is the production of "shal" and other cloths from the wool of sheep and Angora goats; and it is from the proceeds of this manufacture that the people make sufficient money to buy grain. This is a thriving industry, and not only is the Shattak cloth much used in Van and the surrounding districts, but it is exported to other vilayets of the Empire. The Cassaba of Shattak is the centre of this industry, and there did not appear to be any unusual distress there. The high price of grain is, of course, felt, but there was evidently lots of work and all the looms were busy, so that money is being made.

The outlying villages feel the pinch more. Their chief asset is in the wool of their flocks, with which the manufacturing industry of the Cassaba is supplied, and there have been considerable losses among the flocks. This was owing to the length of the past winter, which was also an unusually severe one. The provender ran out before the sheep and goats could be taken out of the stables and pens in which they are kept during the winter, and before it was possible to get the usual spring grazing.

In the same way the people ran short of their provisions, stored, like the forage, only with a view to a winter of normal length; and until the snow has disappeared traffic in any quantity is impossible to and from Shattak, so that there was a difficulty in supplementing the stores by importing from Van.

However, the worst is now over, and with a good harvest and the fall of prices to a more normal level, things should be much as they were. There was much poverty, but no starvation, and I helped the poorest individual cases with small sums of the money which remained in my hands from the £T.17·40 received through your Excellency from Boston, United States of America.

In the half-dozen villages of the Pezandasht Plain the coming crops do not promise well, their fields having been converted into swamps by the excess of water arising from the abnormal snowfall of the past winter. In other parts of the caza there is also more water than usual for the same reason, and new springs have burst out in many places. But it is only Pezandasht which, by its conformation and position, has suffered damage from this cause.

Adjoining Shattak is the Meuks Nahie of the Caza of Kiavash. This is also a region of high mountains and narrow valleys, where much the same conditions may be expected to prevail as in Shattak. The Meuks villages can, perhaps, produce more in the way of crops, but they are even more cut off than the Shattak ones. In summer, at any rate, there is a good road between Van and Shattak which is fit for wheels, and by which transport is easy. But the two roads to Meuks (the direct one from Van through Vostan, over the Aghérov Pass, and the road from Shattak) were still, at the end of June, deep in snow, and impossible even for pack animals, so that I had to visit the Meuks villages on foot.

Here also were scarcity and poverty, but the people are well looked after by the Kurd, Mutiulla Bey, who is the Derebey of the district, and also the Mudir of the Nahie.

Mutiulla Bey says that the people are about as poor as they well can be, and only just support existence, but that this is due not so much to famine or unusual distress this year as to a bad Government, which confines itself to collecting money from the people, and is quite oblivious of any duties towards them in return for the taxation, while Mutiulla Bey's duties as a Mudir are simply those of a tehsildar. As long as he can meet the continual demands for money, he is left to govern the Nahie as he likes. Fortunately he is an enlightened and kind-hearted man, so that, in regard to Meuks, the system does not work so badly, and is not so hard on the people as in many other places.

There is a road between Meuks and Sert which was open for pack-animals, and grain was being brought in by this route. There appeared to be brisk buying and selling at the weekly fair held in the centre of the Cassaba, where the Sert merchants sell cloth and grain, and buy sheep, goats, fruit, skins, and other local produce.

Before going to Meuks I had heard that all the autumn-sown crops had been destroyed by a late hail-storm. But I found that the report was greatly exaggerated. The hail-storm was very local, and had passed across six villages, the crops of which were almost entirely destroyed, while fields on either side of its path were left untouched.

On the whole, the inhabitants of the regions I traversed are not starving, and the poverty, as in the remainder of the vilayet, may be expected to decrease very shortly with the anticipated fall in prices; and, in so far as it is due to natural causes, to disappear with the coming harvest. In so far as it is due to increasing taxation and lack of protection, it is, again, no worse than in other places.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 69.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 31.)

(No. 505.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 25, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I have received a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, stating that he learns from the Consular Agent at Mosul that there has been a serious fight between the Hamawands and Arab tribesmen (Taba'a-ul-Shaik) at Sulimania, in which about 150 Hamawands and some 700 tribesmen were killed.

In reporting this intelligence to your Lordship, I do so under due reserve, as, from the information at my disposal, it scarcely appears possible that the numbers stated by Nimrud Rassan can be accurate, since I understand that there are hardly any Arabs living in the vicinity of Sulimania. There may, however, have been serious fighting between the Hamawand and the Jaff Kurds; but the killing of 700 men seems out of all proportion to the ordinary casualties sustained in tribal warfare on the Persian frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 70.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 7.)

(No. 520.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 31, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith copy of a printed letter purporting to emanate from the "Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne," copies of which were received by the Austrian, German, and Italian Embassies on the day following the explosion at the Yildiz Mosque, and by me and the Russian Ambassador some days later.

Up to the present no clue has been found tending to incriminate the Armenians in the attempted assassination of the Sultan, and such reports as have been current on the subject have pointed in other directions. It is remarkable, therefore, that they should take upon themselves—as from the last two paragraphs but one of this Circular they would appear to do—the responsibility for a crime which has resulted in the loss of many innocent lives, and that they should wantonly endeavour to increase any suspicions which may be entertained by the authorities against their race and creed.

It is, of course, conceivable that the Circular may be a "blind," and may have been issued by other parties with the object of inculpating the Armenians. It seems more probable, however, that the Armenian revolutionaries are its real authors, and that they entertain the hope that the recent outrage, if supposed to be their work, may lead the Government to adopt measures of such severity as to interest the European Powers on their behalf.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 70.

Circular addressed to the Representatives of the Powers signatory to the Berlin Treaty by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

M. l'Ambassadeur,

LES crimes du Tyran, trop longtemps impunis, crient toujours vengeance, et les révolutionnaires Arméniens, devant le suprême désespoir de leur peuple, n'ont point d'embarras dans le choix des moyens.

Nous avons recours à la force brutale, aux procédés que nous-mêmes reprouvons en principe, parce que la terrible réalité dans laquelle nous vivons nous y pousse fatalement.

Cette réalité, c'est le massacre, c'est le règne perpétuel des hordes sauvages avec leurs appétits les plus féroces; ce sont les saignées périodiques, l'extermination savamment organisée de tout un peuple, sous l'œil complaisant de l'Europe!

Après l'effroyable période des grandes tuéries—où 300,000 créatures désarmées furent égorgées par ordre d'Abdul Hamid—l'état dit "normal" se rétablit dans les provinces Arméniennes, et, par une série de mesures Draconiennes, par l'interdiction de circuler, par les impôts toujours plus pesants, par l'éviction des biens communaux des villages, par les meurtres isolés ou en masse, par les conversions forcées à l'Islamisme, l'extermination de notre peuple se poursuit méthodiquement, sûrement.

Hier encore la région de Sassoun fut, pour la seconde fois, dévastée et ensanglantée—quarante villages incendiés et 8,000 hommes impitoyablement massacrés.

Et l'Europe assiste muette à cette immense tragédie—elle qui, il y a vingt-six ans, au Congrès de Berlin, par un engagement solennel, a pris l'Arménie Turque sous sa protection; elle laisse accomplir à sa porte des actes de barbarie sans précédents dans l'histoire du monde, l'épouvantable assassinat d'un peuple qui avait le droit de compter sur sa parole!

Nous ne faisons donc pas la révolution pour elle-même, mais parce que nous y sommes contraints par la force des choses.

Loin de nourrir des sentiments d'hostilité envers le peuple Musulman, loin d'être séparatistes, nous ne demandons qu'une chose: c'est qu'on réalise les garanties qui n'existent pas et que la diplomatie Européenne jugeait le minimum de réformes nécessaires en Mai 1895, avant l'effroyable hécatombe qui suivit la promulgation des soi-disantes réformes.

La Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne a déjà formulé ces revendications à maintes reprises—lors de l'attaque de la Banque Ottomane en 1896, et plus récemment par nos Comités de Sassoun et de Mousch.

Voici nos très modestes et irréductibles exigences:—

1. Institution d'un contrôle Européen permanent; nomination d'un Gouverneur indépendant du Palais, assisté d'une Assemblée élue par le peuple.
2. Réforme de l'impôt; suppression des impôts vexatoires.
3. Création dans les communes rurales et urbaines, en nombre proportionnel à celui des habitants, de gardes champêtres et urbains, munis d'armes d'ordonnance.
4. Réforme des Tribunaux, conformément au Mémorandum de Mai 1895; égalité de toutes les nationalités devant la loi.
5. Amnistie générale pour tous les crimes et délits politiques et faits connexes; rentré des émigrés, et restitution de leurs biens confisqués.
6. Liberté de conscience de la presse et de réunion.

Nous sommes décidés à ne pas déposer les armes tant que satisfaction ne nous aura pas été accordée sur tous ces points.

Que l'on y prenne garde! On ne se débarrassera de la question Arménienne, ni par des massacres organisés, ni par des combinaisons Machiavéliques, ni par l'oubli volontaire des engagements.

Notre acte ne traduit pas un mouvement isolé; il n'est que l'une des manifestations du suprême effort, d'un effort d'un peuple qui a la conscience de ses droits imprescriptibles; trop longtemps foulés aux pieds, qui veut vivre d'une vie vraiment humaine.

Ici et partout où il y a des Arméniens en Asie, en Turquie d'Europe, nous continuerons la lutte par tous les moyens en notre pouvoir, quelles qu'en doivent être les conséquences pour nous-mêmes, pour l'Europe, pour la paix des nations.

(L.S.) La Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne.

No. 71.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 11.)

(No. 112.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 11, 1905.*

DIARBEKIR disturbances.

I have received a telegram from the British Vice-Consul at Diarbekir reporting a panic in the town owing to the insufficient garrison, the proximity of the Kurdish Chief, Ibrahim Pasha, and the attitude of the Moslem population. These latter have threatened to rifle the magazine and to cut the telegraph wires.

I fear that the position of the Christians is very critical. Earnest representations have been made by His Majesty's Embassy to the Porte, who are doing all that lies in their power under the circumstances.

No. 72.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 14.)

(No. 535.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 5, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 433 of the 21st June, reporting information received from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Diarbekir relative to the serious engagements which had occurred between the Milli Confederation of tribes under the leadership of Ibrahim Pasha and the Shamar Arabs, and the devastation of some of the most fertile districts of the vilayet, I have the honour to report that I am in receipt of a telegram from Mr. Shipley, announcing that Ibrahim's followers have come right up to the gates of Diarbekir and pillaged thirty villages in the immediate neighbourhood. He estimates their numbers at 13,000. The Vali has practically no forces at his disposal and declares himself helpless to cope with the situation.

I had already made representations to the Grand Vizier on the danger with which Diarbekir was threatened, and his Highness had caused a letter to be addressed to the Minister of War on the subject.

On the receipt of Mr. Shipley's telegram, I caused further representations to be made to his Highness, expressing my regret that, in spite of the previous warnings, nothing had been done to check the northward advance of the Milli tribes, which was now producing exactly those results which we had predicted.

His Highness did not attempt to dispute the seriousness of the situation. He stated that he had himself received a telegram from the Administrative Council of Diarbekir complaining of the inability of the Government to protect the peaceful population of the province against the depredations of the Milli, and that he had forwarded this to the Palace with a strong representation from himself that the fault of allowing things to reach their present critical stage lay entirely with Zekki Pasha, Commander of the 4th Army Corps, and that this officer should be held personally responsible for everything that might occur.

As I was under the impression that the state of things round Diarbekir might assume even more serious proportions, I specially instructed Mr. Lamb to go so far as to suggest to the Grand Vizier that the services of the British Vice-Consul would be available if his Highness or the Palace considered they might be of assistance in restraining Ibrahim Pasha from committing any acts of aggression or outrage. I made this suggestion on the recommendation of Mr. Mark Sykes who, as your Lordship is aware from my despatch No. 414 of the 14th June last is personally acquainted with Ibrahim Pasha and is of opinion that he might be amenable to Christian influence, if approached in a friendly spirit by someone in whom he could repose confidence.

The Grand Vizier, however, replied that a deputation had already gone out to meet Ibrahim Pasha, but had met with no success. He did not think that the intervention of the Vice-Consul would be attended by any good result.

In consequence of his Highness' statements, the First Dragoman proceeded to the Palace and made strong representations to the Sultan's First Secretary, who promised that they should be communicated to His Imperial Majesty.

I inclose a Memorandum and a map* which Mr. Sykes has prepared from his knowledge of the Milli Confederation and of the local conditions, showing what he assumes to

* Map not printed.

be the present position of Ibrahim Pasha's tribesmen in regard to Diarbekir, and what will be their subsequent movements in conformity with their pastoral habits which are necessarily influenced by the varying seasons.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 72.

Memorandum on Mr. W. Young's Letter of July 19, 1905.

THERE seems nothing abnormal in Ibrahim's presence at a distance of twelve hours, viz., 45 miles from Diarbekir, at this time of year, as Viranshehr is about that distance from Diarbekir.

There is not sufficient force in Diarbekir to cope with Ibrahim; if strong measures are to be taken Zekki Pasha, of Erginjian, is the only man who can carry them out and he is in Ibrahim's pay; on the other hand, as Miss Shattuck (of the American Mission at Urfa) obtained redress for her Armenian villagers by a personal interview, a deputation from Diarbekir might influence him; but I expect that much of the mischief is being done by the Kurageteh, who are Hamidieh, and whose summer camping grounds are close to Diarbekir; they are by the way of being Ibrahim's allies, but I know he cannot hold them, as it is all he can do to keep the road between Urfa and Viranshehr free from their raids.

This is a very bad time to hit Ibrahim:—

1. The crops are out and will be liable to destruction both by troops and tribesmen.
2. Ibrahim's horses are now in good condition and his men effective.
3. His forces are very mobile owing to the quantity of supplies.

In five months' time his horses will be thin and weak, the grain will be out of the way, and he will be moving south.

The scheme for smashing Ibrahim would be to march one strong battalion from Urfa and seize Viranshehr; while two small columns advanced on him, one from Suverek and one from Diarbekir, the garrison of Mardin holding him on the east—about 3,000 men (400 of whom mounted) and five field-guns would suffice for this operation—but to attack him unsuccessfully would make matters worse, as it did last year when he shot a Uzbashi and disarmed the Imperial troops.

(Signed) M. SYKES.

Therapia, August 1, 1905.

No. 73.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 24.)

(No. 543.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 7, 1905.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 406 of the 12th June last, in which I reported to your Lordship on Sir W. Willcocks' proposals for the irrigation of Mesopotamia, I informed your Lordship that I laid the general features of Sir William's schemes before His Imperial Majesty, who seemed to appreciate fully the importance of the suggestions, but stated that so large an undertaking required considerable capital, involving the formation of a Company, and that he would not be able to judge whether the scheme promised to be advantageous to the State until the conditions and terms proposed by the Company were made known to him.

At the time Sir William Willcocks was extremely sanguine as to the possibility of raising the capital in London, and expressed himself confident that he would have no difficulty in doing so.

He subsequently left Constantinople with the intention of conferring with London financiers, having in view the raising of a Company to carry out his schemes, and, by my advice, he called at the Foreign Office before doing so.

However, as far as I can judge, the capitalists in the city, when he approached them, did not seem inclined to fall in with his proposals, as they suggested that he would obtain more encouragement, both official and financial, at Berlin.

Apparently Sir William intends submitting his project to the Deutsche Bank and other German financiers, and is going to Berlin for the purpose of starting negotiations.

Should Sir William's attempt prove successful, and if he succeeds in interesting German groups in his undertaking, any observations His Majesty's Government may make on the subject to the Turkish Government will probably meet with the reply that they had waited for the terms and conditions which the Sultan had asked for before giving his opinion as to the feasibility of the project, and that, as they had not been forthcoming from British groups, the Turkish Government was at liberty to consider other proposals.

In view of this happening, I think it well to put on record the present position of a project which, if it took a practical turn, would materially affect our interest in those regions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 74.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 14.)

(No. 546.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 8, 1905.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 535 of the 5th instant, relative to the depredations of the Milli confederation of tribes, under the leadership of Ibrahim Pasha, round Diarbekir, I have the honour to report that I have received further information on the subject by telegram from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at that town.

Mr. Shipley reports that he has been informed by the Vali that he has received an Imperial Iradé ordering him to summon Ibrahim Pasha to the town, and to push back his tribesmen. The Iradé also promised that the necessary number of troops would be sent.

The issue of the Iradé is doubtless due in a great measure to the earnest representations which, as I reported in my above-mentioned despatch, I caused to be made to the Grand Vizier and at the Palace.

I think it is unlikely that Ibrahim Pasha will dare to disregard the Sultan's direct orders, and he will probably come to some arrangement with the Vali for the eventual peaceful withdrawal of his followers from the neighbourhood.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 75.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 272.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 18, 1905.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 535 of the 5th instant reporting the serious state of affairs in the Vilayet of Diarbekir.

I approve the representations which you have addressed to the Turkish Government on this subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 76.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 21.)

(No. 556.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 12, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith copy of the *procès-verbal* of the meeting of the Société Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Damas–Hamah et Prolongements (Syrian Railway), held at Constantinople on the 24th June last, giving the terms of the new Convention between the Company and the Turkish Government.

Although this railway is not mentioned in the contract for the so-called French Loan, copy of which was inclosed in my despatch No. 322 of the 9th May last, the acceptance by the Porte of this new arrangement was in reality one of the principal conditions on which the loan was contingent, and both Mr. Townley, in his despatch No. 107 of the 13th February, and I myself, in my No. 184 of the 21st March last, have already dealt with the subject in that connection.

The principal stipulations of the new Convention are as follows:-

The line is to be extended to Aleppo, a distance of 143 kilom., making, with the existing line, 331 kilom. in all.

The kilometric guarantee is fixed at 13,600 fr. for the whole line, for which the guarantee was fixed at 15,000 fr. under the previous Convention.

The Company is to provide 15 locomotives and 448 waggons for strategical purposes, the cost of which will be 1,600,000 fr.

The Concession is for 90 years from the date of signature of the new Convention, instead of for 99 years from 1893.

The Turkish Government is to pay forthwith to the Company the sum of £T. 150,000 as compensation for the loss caused to the Damascus-Mezarib section of the line by the parallel construction of the Hedjaz Railway.

The Ottoman Government has been severely criticized for consenting to this arrangement, on the ground that the railway can never pay independent of the guarantee.

The country round Aleppo is fertile and relatively progressive, but as the natural outlet to the sea for the produce of the district is direct to Alexandretta, it cannot be expected that products will incur the expenses of a long railway journey increased by the inconvenience of different gauges, while they can be transported in a cheaper and more direct way.

I understand that M. Vitali, the contractor for the building of the line, has contracted at the rate of 120,000 fr. per kilom., whereas the actual cost cannot exceed 40,000 fr. It is evident, therefore, that the Company will be obliged to raise an unnecessarily large capital, that the charges on the railway will thereby be increased, and that the chance of the receipts enabling the Company to dispense with any portion of the guarantee is diminished.

I should add that the guarantee consists, as in the previous Convention, of the tithes of the sanjaks of Hauran Hamah, Acre, Lattakia, Damascus, and Tripoli.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 76.

Extract from Procès-Verbal of Extraordinary General Meeting (held at Constantinople, June 24, 1905) of the Société Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Damas-Hamah et Prolongements.

L'ACTE ADDITIONNEL du 18 Mai, 1905, est ainsi conçu:—

Entre son Excellence Zihni Pacha, Ministre de Commerce et des Travaux Publics, agissant au nom du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, d'une part, et le Comte Georges Vitali, agissant au nom du Conseil d'Administration de la Société Damas-Hamah et Prolongements, d'autre part, il a été convenu ce qui suit:—

ARTICLE Ier.

En vertu de l'Article I de l'Acte Additionnel du 29 Mouharrem, 1318 (15 (28) Mai, 1316 (1900)), il a été convenu entre le Gouvernement Impérial et la Société Ottomane de construire un chemin de fer entre Hamah et Alep.

Dans le cas où le point de jonction pour le raccordement à Alep de la ligne Rayak-Alep avec la ligne de Konia-Bagdad ne serait pas à la gare de la Société, et si le Gouvernement Impérial manifeste le désir de faire prolonger la ligne de la Société jusqu'à la gare de la ligne de Bagdad, la Société se conformera aux décisions du

Gouvernement Impérial, étant entendu que, dans ce dernier cas, ce prolongement bénéficiera de la même garantie que le reste de la ligne de Rayak-Alep.

La garantie de la ligne Hamah-Alep ne commencera à courir qu'au bout d'un délai de vingt-six mois, après lesquels la ligne devra être achevée et livrée à l'exploitation. Ce délai de vingt-six mois commencera lui-même à courir au mois à partir de l'échange des présentes. La garantie de 15,000 fr., affectée à la ligne de Rayak-Hamah, sera réduite à cette date au chiffre de la nouvelle garantie accordée à la ligne Rayak-Alep.

Si la Société terminait les travaux avant cette date elle aura la faculté d'exploiter à ses risques et périls, et sans garantie aucune, la section de Hamah-Alep et les recettes brutes qui seront réalisées lui appartiendront. Toutefois, si, comme il est dit ci-dessus, la ligne était achevée avant le délai prévu et qu'elle soit mise en exploitation par la Société, les tarifs en vigueur sur la ligne Rayak-Hamah seront réduits de 50 pour cent pour les transports des marchandises et des voyageurs effectués de la ligne de Rayak-Hamah à celle de Hamah-Alep et *vice versâ*, et ce jusqu'à l'expiration dit dit délai.

Le représentant de la Société, M. le Comte Georges Vitali, a remis au Gouvernement Impérial une déclaration dont ci-dessous la copie:—

"*Au Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics.*

"Excellence, "*Constantinople, le 12 Avril*, 1905.

"En réponse à la question qui m'est posée à ce sujet par le Département de votre Excellence, j'ai l'honneur de l'informer qu'il résulte en effet des prévisions de recettes de la partie de la ligne Hamah-Alep que les produits des dîmes des trois sandjiaks affectés à la garantie de cette partie de ligne et actuellement exercés par la Dette Publique devant suffire, je ne demanderai qu'il leur en soit adjoint de nouveaux qu'en cas d'absolue nécessité, par insuffisance.

"Toutefois, je dois, pour le cas de besoin, réserver formellement les droits antérieurs acquis à la Société par nos Conventions avec le Gouvernement Impérial.

"Veuillez, &c.

"(Pour la Société Damas-Hamah et Prolongements),
(Signé) "GEORGES VITALI."

ARTICLE II.

En raison de la distance qui sépare Alep de Birédjik, la garantie de la ligne Rayak-Alep a été arrêtée au chiffre de 13,600 fr. par an et par kilomètre.

D'autre part, le Gouvernement Impérial remettra par voie de transaction à la Société Ottomane une somme de £T. 150,000 à titre d'indemnité pour le préjudice qu'elle réclame du chef de la construction du Chemin de Fer Hamidié du Hédjaz. Cette somme sera payée à la Société par la Banque Impériale Ottomane conformément à l'entente avec le Ministère des Finances.

Le paiement de cette somme ne pourra, d'ailleurs, être effectué que sur présentation à la Banque Impériale Ottomane du reçu du quitus mentionné à l'Article VIII ci-dessous.

ARTICLE III.

A la suite d'une correspondance échangée avec le Ministère de la Guerre au sujet du matériel roulant nécessaire à la ligne Rayak-Alep, conformément à l'Article XXXIII de la Convention originelle, le dit Département, dans un teskéré qu'il a adressé, en réponse, a déterminé que la Société est obligée d'acheter au moins 15 locomotives à quatre essieux couplés en dehors des huit à trois essieux existantes; de même elle fournira 448 wagons de différents types pour pouvoir composer en tout 14 trains à raison de 32 véhicules par train, sans compter les 22 plateformes destinés au transport de canons et de leurs caissons. Chaque train sera composé comme suit:—

1 voiture pour les officiers.
21 wagons pour les soldats.
9 wagons pour les chevaux et bagages.
1 fourgon.

Ce matériel sera du même type que celui du Chemin de Fer d'Anatolie.

Si la Société a déjà acheté des wagons plus légers, ils ne seront admis que si les chaînes d'attelage et les châssis de ces wagons présentent les mêmes conditions de solidité voulue que les autres wagons qui devront composer les trains.

Ce matériel roulant devra être fourni en état de service lors de la réception définitive de la ligne de Hamah–Alep; moyennant cette fourniture, les effets de l'Article XXXIII de la Convention du 21 Zilcadé, 1310 (25 Mai (6 Juin), 1309 (1893)), seront définitivement épuisés en ce qui concerne les transports militaires.

ARTICLE IV.

Le chiffre de garantie de recettes brutes afférentes aux deux sections de la ligne de Rayak–Hamah–Alep étant définitivement fixé à l'Article II ci-dessus, il est stipulé que la franchise des droits de douane pour la houille prévue à l'Article VIII de la Convention du 6 Juin, 1893, sera maintenue jusqu'à ce que ses recettes atteignent ce chiffre de garantie.

La franchise douanière prévue au susdit Article VIII sera appliqué sur la ligne de Hamah–Alep et au matériel roulant demandé par le Ministère de la Guerre, et indiqué à l'Article III.

ARTICLE V.

Il a été convenu que le délai de concession des deux sections de chemin de fer constituant la ligne de Rayak–Alep sera de quatre-vingt-dix années à partir de la signature du présent Acte Additionnel.

ARTICLE VI.

Il sera fait dans le délai de six mois après la signature du présent Acte Additionnel, remise au Gouvernement Impérial de l'ancienne route de Beyrouth à Damas avec ses bâtiments et accessoires, y compris ceux de Beyrouth et de Damas.

A titre exceptionnel, il est accordé un délai d'une année pour l'évacuation des locaux de la Place des Canons à Beyrouth, où sont installés les bureaux de la Direction d'Exploitation du chemin de fer, qui continuera à y loger gratuitement jusqu'à l'expiration de ce délai.

ARTICLE VII.

Toutes les Conventions et tous les Actes Additionnels relatifs aux lignes concédées à la Société Ottomane restent en vigueur en tout ce qu'ils n'ont pas de contraire aux présentes.

ARTICLE VIII.

La Société Ottomane remettra au Gouvernement Impérial un quitus dont le texte a été arrêté d'un commun accord, déclarant qu'elle n'a aucun droit ni prétention à formuler du chef de ses réclamations actuellement existantes au sujet de la ligne Damas–M'zérib.

L'échange du présent Acte Additionnel aura lieu contre remise du susdit quitus au Gouvernement Impérial, qui délivrera en échange le reçu indiqué à l'Article II.

ARTICLE IX.

Par interprétation et application définitive des Conventions antérieures, il a été arrêté ce qui suit:—

Si les recettes brutes annuelles de la ligne Rayak–Alep dépassent le chiffre de la garantie kilométrique convenue, les 50 pour cent de l'excédent reviendront au Gouvernement Impérial.

Le Gouvernement Impérial se réserve dorénavant la faculté de reprendre à quelque époque que cela soit la concession de la ligne Rayak–Alep moyennant le paiement au concessionnaire jusqu'à la fin de la concession d'une somme annuelle équivalente au 50 pour cent des recettes brutes moyennes des cinq années qui précéderont l'année de la reprise, sans que la dite somme annuelle puisse être inférieure à 11,000 fr. par kilom. Dans ce cas, le Gouvernement Impérial devra rembourser entièrement et en une seule fois, les obligations 4 pour cent amortissables en quatre-vingt-dix ans qui auront été émises par la Société et qui n'auraient pas été encore amorties au moment du rachat, étant entendu que le nombre des obligations non amorties ne pourra être supérieur à celui qui correspondra, au taux adopté, à cette annuité de 11,000 fr. par kilom.

En outre, le Gouvernement Impérial assurera à la Société, jusqu'à l'expiration de la Concession, le paiement à des époques à convenir de la différence de la somme de 11,000 fr. conformément à la moyenne des recettes brutes des cinq années qui précéderont la date du rachat.

En cas de rachat de la ligne par le Gouvernement Impérial, le matériel fixe ainsi que le matériel roulant, tels que locomotives, wagons, et chariots servant à l'exploitation, seront gratuitement remis au Gouvernement Impérial. Tous les approvisionnements, combustibles, et tous les objets mobiliers servant à l'exploitation et existant à l'époque du rachat de la Concession, seront achetés, à dire d'experts, par le Gouvernement Impérial.

En cas de rachat de la ligne, si le Gouvernement Impérial ne juge pas convenable d'exploiter par ses propres agents, il n'en cèdera pas l'exploitation à une autre Société, mais il promet de la faire exploiter par la Société par voie de bail.

Le présent Acte Additionnel a été, conformément à l'Iradé promulgué par Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan en date du 10 Rébi-ul-Ewel, 1323 (2 Mai, 1321), fait en double, signé et échangé à Constantinople, le 5 (18) Mai, 1321 (1905).

Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics,

(Timbre de 50 p. n.) (L.S.) (Signé) ZIHNI.

Pour la Société Damas–Hamah et Prolongements,

(Signé) GEORGES VITALI.

Date d'échange 13 Rébi-ul-Ewel, 1323 (5 Mai, 1321 (1905)).

Pour texte conforme:

Chef du Bureau de la Comptabilité du Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics,

(L.S.) (Signé) TEWFIK.

Certifié conforme à l'original en Turc:

La Direction du Bureau de Traduction du Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics,

(L.S.) (Signé) MOUHIS.

Le texte du quitus arrêté d'un commun accord avec le Gouvernement Impérial, ainsi qu'il est dit à l'Article VIII de l'Acte Additionnel, est le suivant:—

"M. le Ministre,

"Nous avons l'honneur, au nom de la Société Damas–Hamah et Prolongements et selon les accords intervenus avec le Gouvernement Impérial, en vertu d'une décision approbative de l'Assemblée Générale des Actionnaires en date du 24 Juin, 1905, prise, conformément aux Statuts, de donner au Gouvernement Impérial par les présentes, conformément à l'Article VIII de l'Acte Additionnel en date du 5 (18) Mai, 1905, quitus déchargeant n'avoir plus aucun droit ni prétention du chef des réclamations actuellement formulées contre le Gouvernement Impérial par la Société au sujet de la

ligne de Damas-M'zérib, par suite de la création de la ligne parallèle de Damas-Dérâa, la Société s'interdisant à l'avenir toute réclamation à raison de la construction de la dite ligne, ce chef de réclamation étant épuisé.

"Veuillez, &c.

"(Signé à titre provisoire et à échanger après approbation par l'Assemblée Générale des Actionnaires de la Société),

(Signé) "GEORGES VITALI.

"A son Excellence Zihni Pacha,
Ministre du Commerce et des
Travaux Publics."

No. 77.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 28.)

(No. 561.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, August 16, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 427 of the 20th June, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reporting two recent conflicts in the district.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 77.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 32.)

Sir, *Bitlis, August 1, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 18 of the 4th June, I have the honour to report that two conflicts with insurgents have lately occurred in this district, the one at Sokhort, on the north slope of Mount Nimrud, about the 15th July, and the other on the 23rd at Arkavank in the middle of the Mush plain.

In the former incident five Christians, including one woman, are said to have been killed, and according to Armenian accounts they were all peaceable villagers.

In the fight at Arkavank ten persons were killed; the Vali describes them as being all insurgents, and the same band which had been at Sokhort. Armenians say that seven of them were insurgents and three villagers, that the band was a different one, recently formed under the leadership of a certain Arsu of Dormirt, composed entirely of natives of the plain, partly of refugees from Hars, the scene of the conflict reported in the despatch under reference; they declare that the attack was made by gendarmes, troops from Mush, and Kurds from neighbouring villages, that the village was thoroughly plundered, and that the presence of the insurgents had been betrayed to the authorities. Both accounts agree as to the Turks having suffered some loss, though they vary as to its extent, and they also agree in asserting the total destruction of the band.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

No. 78.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 28.)

(No. 562.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, August 16, 1905.*

WITH reference to Mr. Townley's despatch No. 134 of the 28th February, and to your Lordship's No. 77 of the 13th March, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting the death of the Kurdish Chief, Jafer Agha.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 78.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 33.)

Sir, *Van, July 27, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report the death of Jafer Agha, Chief of the Persian Shekaks, who was the subject of my No. 7 of the 4th February.

This is an affair of some local importance, as Jafer Agha was a man of note among the Kurds on the Turco-Persian frontier.

There are many versions of the occurrence here. According to some he was hanged in Tabreez by the Government; according to others he was killed in a quarrel. The details which I give are taken from the official report sent to the Vali of Van by the Kaimakam of Gevver, on the frontier.

For some time past Jafer Agha had been fighting with the Persian authorities, and had been making efforts to get settled in Turkish territory. These efforts having failed, he had apparently entered into negotiations with the Vali Ahd at Tabreez; and some "mujtehhids" came to Jafer Agha with an invitation for him to go to Tabreez and settle matters personally. They at the same time gave him a safe-conduct and the promise of a "khillat" and other rewards. Jafer Agha was at length persuaded, and repaired to Tabreez with a small escort of about twenty horsemen of his tribe. It is said that the Vali Ahd wished to have him killed at their first interview, but that the "mujtehhids" who had pledged their word would not allow it. So they were sent away, and Jafer Agha was allowed to depart. But he had not gone far before he was recalled to the Vali Ahd's house, and on entering the house for the second time he was shot by men concealed behind the door or curtains at the entrance. His own men, who were shut out, on hearing the shots and not seeing their Chief appear, guessed what had happened, and it is said that they dashed through the streets of Tabreez killing and wounding several people in revenge, and finally escaped unharmed.

This incident has caused a good deal of interest and anger among all the Kurds round here, and I fear that this ill-advised step on the part of the Vali Ahd will have no good effect as regards the security of the frontier.

To treacherously murder a powerful Chief in this way is an admission that the Government was not strong enough to tackle him and his tribe openly, or able to bring him to justice in a lawful way.

Ever since the murder of the American missionary, Mr. Labaree, last year, and the futile and half-hearted attempts of the Persian authorities to punish the Kurds concerned in that affair, travelling has been more than usually dangerous for Europeans in those regions; and I am informed by the English missionaries in Urmi that even the environs of that town are so unsafe, owing to the fear of the Kurds, that they are unable to go out a few miles to their usual summer quarters. Here, the merchants are in despair, as they say that the Persian Government will be able to do nothing to prevent Jafer Agha's men from revenging their Chief's death on all travellers and caravans.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 79.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 28.)

(No. 563.)

My Lord, *Therapia, August 16, 1905.*

IN his despatch No. 45 of the 17th January last, Mr. Townley reported to your Lordship that a German Mission had left for the country between Mosul and Bagdad, with the object of examining thoroughly and carefully the whole of the petroleum deposits in that region for the purpose of ascertaining the exact value of the deposits, and whether it would be possible to unite them by a complete system of narrow gauge railways.

The expenses of the Mission (120,000 fr.) were borne by the Deutsche Bank, while His Imperial Majesty the Sultan granted all possible facilities for its assistance during the time it was pursuing its investigations.

I have now the honour to report to your Lordship that the expedition has returned; three of its members are remaining in the country to study the commercial situation, the others having gone to Berlin.

I learn from a confidential source that the members of the Mission are well satisfied with the results of their researches, and I hope before long to forward to your Lordship a full report of their views.

At the present moment the Germans are on the point of renewing their provisional agreement with the Civil List for another year; this Agreement confers on the Germans the same advantages and privileges as a "permis de recherche," to which it is practically equivalent.

As regards the British Syndicate under Mr. Nicholls, I learn that it has suspended operations for the formation of an Ottoman Company backed by British capital, on account of the want of good faith among its partisans at the Palace, the difficulty of finding in London the large capital required for the initial expenses, and the predisposition of His Imperial Majesty to give the concession to the Germans.

This is all the more to be regretted, as last year (see my despatch No. 312 of the 29th April, 1904) the British Syndicate was fairly confident that it would succeed and believed that the Germans were powerless to work the petroliferous districts; your Lordship will see, however, that the matter now wears a very different complexion, for, although the British Syndicate has not abandoned all hope of obtaining its ends, its negotiations with the Civil List have come to a standstill, while the Germans will soon be prosecuting their researches once more.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 80.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 28.)

(No. 573.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 22, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 546 of the 8th, and my telegram No. 112 of the 11th instant, relative to the steps taken by the authorities to restrain the Milli Confederation of Kurds under Ibrahim Pasha, I have the honour to inclose herewith a despatch from Mr. Wilkie Young, in which he describes the damage done to the villages in the vicinity of Diarbekir, and giving his opinion as to the motives which caused the Chieftain to extend his borders beyond the River Tigris.

While the above-mentioned despatch was in transit, I received two telegrams from Mr. Shipley, the present Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, dated the 8th instant.

The first reported that the Moslem Notables of Diarbekir had telegraphed to the Palace demanding the exile of Ibrahim Pasha. The second reported the destruction of a village near Diarbekir, and that the Notables had created a panic in the town, causing the people to close their shops, and obliging the Vali by force to send another telegram to the Palace.

On the 9th instant Mr. Shipley reported another panic.

I have now ascertained from Mr. Shipley (see Inclosure 2) that these panics were caused by the Moslem Notables of Diarbekir, who wish to discredit Ibrahim Pasha, and at the same time find an opportunity to rob and oppress the Christians, who are generally protected and befriended by the Kurdish Chief.

It will be seen, therefore, that these disorders were the outcome of the ambitious policy of Ibrahim Pasha and the counter-intrigues of his enemies, the wealthy Moslems of Diarbekir.

The situation would have been by no means serious were it not that the Turkish authorities had no reliable and impartial force at their disposal for the purpose of controlling the nomad Kurds on the one side, and the preservation of order among the turbulent Moslems of Diarbekir on the other.

I made representations on this subject to the Turkish Government, suggesting that an adequate military force should be dispatched for the purpose of maintaining order, and I am glad to be able to inform your Lordship that Mr. Shipley reports to me that a battalion of infantry has been dispatched to Diarbekir, and is now engaged in clearing the district.

In consequence of the advent of the troops the situation has decidedly improved, the Moslem Notables have quarrelled among themselves, and are now coming to terms with Ibrahim Pasha, while the latter complains to the Government of the ill-treatment of his men by the Imperial forces.

For the time being, therefore, there is no cause for any anxiety on account of the Christians in the district of Diarbekir.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 80.

Mr. Wilkie Young to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 25.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, July 25, 1905.*

REFERRING to my despatch No. 22 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I have just returned from visiting a number of villages in the immediate neighbourhood of Diarbekir, and find that these at least are for the moment relieved from the invasion of nomad Kurds from which they have suffered during the past few weeks.

Considerable damage to crops and other property had, indeed, been done, but credit is due to the Vali for the energetic manner in which, now that he is armed with the requisite authority from Constantinople, he is urging Ibrahim Pasha's tribesmen to recross the Tigris and return to their usual camping ground.

I am disposed to think that the object of this irregular incursion was not, as stated, to find better pasture for flocks and herds, for that exists in abundance and of richer quality on the Karaja Dagh, which is the traditional and recognized sphere of Ibrahim Pasha and his people during the summer months, but rather to levy blackmail upon a number of comparatively rich and defenceless villages.

In any case, it is to be hoped that no pains will be spared in the future to control the movements of these irresponsible nomads. Much remains to be done, and, in justice to the local authorities, it must be said that, where Ibrahim Pasha and his Hamidies are concerned, their best efforts are likely to fail of their effect without powerful support and explicit instructions from Constantinople.

Ibrahim Pasha's power is constantly increasing, but it is well organized, and through him much might be done to keep a very large district in order; and it is not unlikely that this is precisely the impression he wishes to convey at Constantinople and elsewhere. Locally, at least, he is credited with great ambitions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. WILKIE YOUNG.

Inclosure 2 in No. 80.

Mr. Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 26.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, August 7, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to confirm my telegram of to-day's date, in which I reported the receipt here of an Iradé ordering the Vali to summon Ibrahim Pasha to Diarbekir, and, if necessary, to use force to make him come.

A messenger left this afternoon with a copy of the telegram to find Ibrahim Pasha.

This would appear to be the climax to the great question of the year, and to foretell the complete downfall of Ibrahim Pasha. That is, at least, the construction put upon the Iradé by the Notables of the town.

I have not been long enough here to venture any opinion with conviction, but it seems to me very undesirable that Ibrahim Pasha's power should be completely broken. It is practically beyond doubt that in acting as he has done this year he has merely obeyed orders from Constantinople, which orders, however, he interpreted in too wide a sense. The local Moslem magnates, I have reason to believe, are a fanatical, powerful, and unscrupulous set of men, and the only means which the Government found for curbing their ambition and lust of money was to set Ibrahim Pasha on them. This view is confirmed by the fact that, of the forty villages which are said to have been pillaged by his men, not one is inhabited by or belongs to Christians. The whole of the brunt has been borne by the Moslem villages, the proprietors of which are

mostly Diarbekir Notables, who have certainly not lost one-hundredth part of the sum of which they have robbed the Government.

These men are already gloating over the downfall of Ibrahim Pasha, and attributing it to their own influence, and it is to be feared that if he is really crushed they will get entirely out of hand. The Christians are by no means so pleased with this latest and most unexpected phase of the question, and fear that with Ibrahim Pasha their last bulwark against the greed and oppression of the Moslem magnates will disappear. All their Bishops and Notables refused to sign the telegram to His Majesty to which I referred in my telegram to your Excellency.

There is yet a third side to the question—that regarding the other tribes who have hitherto been kept in check by Ibraham Pasha, and who will certainly revolt if he is degraded or removed.

It is more than likely, therefore, that unless the Government shows itself much stronger in the management of this vilayet than it has done so far, quite apart from the question of Ibrahim Pasha, the last state of the country will be worse than the first, and that instead of one more or less responsible brigand we shall have a hundred irresponsible thieves.

I hope, however, that the severe terms in which the Imperial Order was couched were only a sedative to public opinion, and that Ibrahim Pasha will be allowed to retire safely to his usual domains, where he is useful as a caution to other less influential but no less greedy robbers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) AVALON SHIPLEY.

P.S. *August* 8.—I hear to-day that the Notables intend to send another telegram to the Palace demanding that Ibrahim Pasha and his whole family should be exiled from this vilayet.

I propose this afternoon to urge the Vali to keep these men in their proper place, and think it so important that he should begin at once that I am telegraphing to your Excellency suggesting that he should receive strict orders to that effect, else the government of this province will become absolutely impossible.

A. S.

No. 81.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 28.)

(No. 577.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 22, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 572 of the 30th May, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reporting recent fighting between troops and insurgents at Sikavi, to the north of Mush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 81.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Bitlis, August 8, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report that a fight occurred last week between troops and insurgents at Sikavi, or Sukhavo, the village near the Euphrates, north of Mush, which was the scene of the incident described by Captain Tyrrell in July 1904 (Blue Book, Turkey No. 3 of 1904, p. 81).

According to the early Armenian reports which have reached Bitlis, the insurgent Chief Kevork (see my despatch No. 16 of 14th May) was the leader, with the whole of his band of seventy men, and has inflicted considerable loss on the troops, thirty men and two captains being said to be killed, while the revolutionist loss is stated to be one or two only. It is added that fighting continues in the neighbourhood.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

No. 82.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 28.)

(No. 580. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 22, 1905.*

IN my despatch No. 14, Treaty, of the 24th ultimo, giving details of the bomb outrage near the Yildiz Palace on the 21st July, I mentioned that there was no trace of the perpetrator or of his accomplices, and that it was generally surmised that he had perished in the explosion.

The investigations which were immediately set on foot by the police led, however, to the discovery among the fragments of the wrecked carriages of some pieces of india-rubber tyres, which at once attracted suspicion, as there are only two or three private carriages in Constantinople, which are known to be fitted with such tyres.

Inquiries at the custom-house led to the discovery that a carriage provided with india-rubber tyres had been recently cleared there from Trieste, and it was eventually found to have been delivered to a certain M. Rips, supposed to be an Armenian from the Caucasus who was traced from one hotel to another in the town, and finally located in some lodgings next door to a house occupied by a Belgian named Joris, with whom he was proved to have been on intimate terms.

M. Rips, who was provided with a Russian passport, was proved to have left Constantinople accompanied by his wife on the evening the explosion occurred.

Joris was at once arrested, and subjected to a close examination by the Special Commission of Inquiry, which had been appointed by Imperial Iradé under the Presidency of the Procureur-Général of the Court of Cassation to discover the authors of the outrage.

It was not, however, until at the special request of the Sublime Porte the German Post Office had seized and given up to the Commission certain correspondence which had passed through the German mails addressed to M. Joris, M. Rips, and other persons, that the former decided to admit his complicity in the plot.

He confessed that, during a stay of some three or four years in Constantinople he had been brought in contact with some Armenians who were devising plans to assassinate the Sultan.

After some unsuccessful experiments, in which two of the conspirators lost their lives, they had decided to use melinite, and they succeeded in procuring 150 kilog. of the explosive in small packets by steamers arriving from the Black Sea. The india-rubber tyred carriage was obtained from Vienna, and on the day of the attempt the man Rips, accompanied by a young lady, drove to the Selamlik with an infernal machine containing 80 kilog. of melinite under the box. They withdrew before the explosion, and left Constantinople together with all the other conspirators the same evening.

He maintains that he does not know what became of the remaining 70 kilog. of melinite which were imported; but he asserts that if the melinite in the infernal machine had not been old and damp, not only would all the persons attending the Selamlik in the Yildiz Mosque have been killed, but the mosque itself and the Diplomatic Tribune close by, would have been destroyed.

The Commission of Inquiry have also ascertained that the funds supplied to the conspirators, Joris, Rips, &c., were sent through the succursales of the Crédit Lyonnais at Sophia and Philippopoli.

This information appears to have been confirmed by the Director of the establishment at Constantinople, who has thereby incurred much censure from public opinion.

The excitement and uneasiness caused by this incident have been increased by the discovery, on the 12th instant, of a number of bombs in the house of an Armenian at Smyrna. I inclose herewith copy of a despatch from Mr. Acting Consul-General Monahan, giving an account of the manner in which the discovery was made. A store of eighty infernal machines and forty-eight bombs is said to have been revealed, and a quantity of correspondence was seized, among which was found a letter from Andranik, the leader of the Armenian anarchist revolutionaries at Lucerne, remitting a sum of 700*l.*, and expressing the hope that the Sultan's birthday would be duly celebrated in Smyrna.

The discovery of these fresh bombs and the probability of the plot being abetted,

not only by Armenians, but also by other extremists and the Revolutionary Committees in Bulgaria, and possibly by the Young Turk party, has created all the greater anxiety in official circles at Constantinople, as they now realize how incapable the Turkish police is to deal with affairs of this kind.

As a consequence of these discoveries, extraordinary precautionary measures are being taken by the police. Hundreds of persons have been arrested, nearly all of whom, however, have been subsequently released; patrols have been doubled; and the approach to the public buildings is denied even to the Dragoman's carriages, and no boat or "caique" is allowed to put out on the Bosphorus after sunset without special permission.

I learn that the Sultan has reverted to the theory which he held immediately after the explosion—that the originators of the outrage are to be found in certain disaffected Turkish circles, and that he even goes so far as to suspect his cousin and second heir to the throne, Yussuf Izzedin, who is supposed to be imbued with liberal ideas, of complicity in the plot against his life.

As a result, a number of Turks are being arrested, and the police are carrying out domiciliary visits in the houses of the more prominent political exiles.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

P.S.—Considerable anxiety is felt here as to what may happen on the 1st September, the anniversary of the Sultan's accession, as it is generally supposed that there are many other bombs in existence, and still unaccounted for.

N. R. O'C.

Inclosure in No. 82.

Acting Consul-General Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 37.)
Sir, *Smyrna, August* 15, 1905.

WITH reference to my telegram of yesterday, I have the honour to report that the following is the information which I have so far been able to obtain about the discovery of bombs and the arrest of Armenians:—

During the past fortnight special police inquiries into the doings of Armenians have been held at Magnesia, five hours by rail from Smyrna, and perhaps in other places in this vilayet. On the 9th or 10th instant the house of a respectable Armenian in Smyrna, named Papasian, was searched, papers were seized, and Papasian and his son were taken to prison where they still remain. On the 11th the police heard of a wounded Armenian who had said he had been accidently wounded by a pistol shot by another Armenian in a house in Smyrna. The police visited the house on the 12th and found nobody there, the two Armenians having disappeared and being now still wanted. The police found in the house papers, many bombs, and a quantity of crude dynamite. Bombs and dynamite have also been found in other houses in Smyrna and perhaps in other parts of the vilayet. The total number of bombs found is stated by police and other official informants to be 128—eighty large and forty-eight small—together with two boxes of wicks, and with machinery used in making bombs.

Armenians have on and since the 12th been arrested wholesale; there are now 120 under arrest in Smyrna of whom six are definitely charged. The local authorities attach the greatest importance to the affair. As a rule no Armenian is allowed to leave the town. No boat, not even the smallest row-boat, can leave the quay without going to the passport office for its occupants to be examined. The documents found are said to prove that it was intended to blow up the Government House, the Consulates, the custom-house, and the banks, and 800*l.* of money remitted from America is said to have been traced.

The story have points of improbability and possible exaggeration, and I will report further.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

No. 83.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 4.)

(No. 589.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 26, 1905.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 580 of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith, copy of a further despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Smyrna, giving a description of the bombs and infernal machines discovered in the town and reporting the execution of an Armenian.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 83.

Acting Consul-General Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 39.)
Sir, *Smyrna, August* 22, 1905.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 37 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to report that the arresting of Armenians and the searching of Armenian houses have been going on since that date in Smyrna and Magnesia and perhaps in other parts of the vilayet. The number of Armenians under arrest here every day is from 100 to 200. It varies, as some from time to time are released and others brought in. I have heard of no specific case of cruelty or extortion, though it is perhaps unfortunate that the leading part should be taken by Said Bey, the Vali's son, from whose reputation extortion is to be expected.

There seems to be no possible doubt that there was a most formidable plot to blow up buildings and destroy life. I have had the honour to report that a house was taken a few months ago in Smyrna by two Armenians and that bombs were discovered in it. The two have not been caught. In the house were found 80 large bombs, 35 small ones, and 3 clockwork infernal machines, besides a quantity of dynamite. The Vali has to-day shown me one of the bombs and one of the infernal machines. The bomb is spherical, of thin cast iron filled with dynamite, or at least some yellow substance said to be dynamite, which appears through a hole in the top, and studded on the outside with what look like small stout iron nails. I understand that when driven by impact into infernal caps these nails would cause explosion. The bomb which I saw is one of the smaller ones. It weighs between 2 and 3 lb. and has a diameter of about 5 inches. The larger ones are similar, but perhaps of about twice the size. The infernal machine is exactly like a large exceptionally deep brass alarm clock with minute and second hands and the ordinary clock figures on the dial plate. These infernal machines have not been opened, and it is not known what is inside them.

The Vali told me he had evidence that they were imported from Russia. He also told me that four Armenian chiefs of the plot, strangers to this part of Turkey, who had come here from Europe, disappeared at the time of the attempt on the Sultan at Constantinople, and that all trace of them has for the present been lost, that the two Armenians whose disappearance I have already reported belong to this part of the country and were working under the orders of those four, and that he had proofs that it was intended to blow up the Konak (Government House), the Ottoman Bank, the Public Debt Office, the railway stations, and I think he said the Custom-house.

Two Armenians who are under arrest opened a butcher's shop next the Public Debt Office on the quay a month or two ago. Incriminating papers were found in the shop, and money remitted to the two from Europe to the amount of about 800*l.* T. has been traced. A great mass of papers collected from Armenian houses is at the Konak.

I hear that suspicious-looking small boxes have been discovered in what is described as a sort of tunnel under a house occupied by Armenians but have not yet been examined.

With reference to my telegram of yesterday, the execution of an Armenian here yesterday morning was no doubt ordered to strike terror into Armenians at this juncture. The man was a revolutionary emissary, going by the name of Haik Azizoff,

the name on the Russian, or some say American, passport found on him. In October 1902 he shot dead a rich Armenian here named Mateos Baliozian who had refused to contribute to the revolutionary fund, and for this crime he was sentenced to death in December 1902. Just before his death, which he met with the greatest courage, he stated that he was really Reshag, of Magnesia, in Aidin Vilayet, and that the passport did not belong to him. His death by hanging appears, from what I hear, to have been barbarously slow.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

P.S.—I find that I am perhaps mistaken in saying that the nails would cause an explosion through internal caps. The Vali's son, Said Bey, who as I have reported is taking the leading part in the investigation, distinctly states that the caps, which have been removed, were fixed to the nails externally. Experienced persons whom I have consulted, cannot understand how the external caps would cause an explosion. The larger bombs are with the military authorities and have not been shown to any one and there seems to be doubts as to their exact form and nature. I will inquire further into the whole subject.

J. H. M.

No. 84.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 4.)

(No. 595.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 29, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 577 of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reporting that the fighting said to have taken place at Sikavi did not occur.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 84.

Acting Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 36.)
Sir, *Bitlis, August 15, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 33 of the 8th August, I have the honour to state that the report of a fight at Sikavi is unfounded, and to express my regret at having been misled by the positiveness of the assertions that such an encounter had taken place, whatever might be the truth as to the details alleged. I have little doubt that the Chief Kevork is in the Mush plain, but since the conflict at Arkavank, reported in my despatch No. 32 of the 1st August, there has apparently been no fighting, though I hear that the authorities are searching the villages for insurgents.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

No. 85.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 4.)

(No. 598.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 29, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 580 of the 26th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Smyrna, reporting the discovery of dynamite under two bridges on the Smyrna–Aidin Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 85.

Acting Consul-General Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 41.)
Sir, *Smyrna, August 26, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 39 of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to report that within the last three days four petroleum tins, filled with dynamite of a total weight of 2 cwt., have been found on the Smyrna–Aidin Railway, two of them under the bridge at 50 miles from Smyrna, a little beyond Ayasoluk, and the other two under the bridge at 59 miles from Smyrna. The first two, those at the 50-mile bridge, were discovered from information given by Said Boy, the Vali's son, who told the manager of the railway that he had heard from an Armenian that dynamite had been placed under a railway bridge near Ayasoluk, and the other two were subsequently found in a search made along the line by the railway people. All four tins were found placed against piers of the respective bridges in such a way as to destroy the bridges if fuses were set.

I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Altintop of an account of the discovery of bombs, &c., in the "Ahong," a Turkish newspaper of Smyrna, of to-day's date.

I regret that in my despatch above referred to I inaccurately stated that I had already reported that the house in which the bombs, infernal machines, and dynamite were discovered was taken a few months ago by two Armenians. It appears that the house was taken a few months ago by a third Armenian, a carpenter, carrying on business in Smyrna, that the two Armenians were staying in the house, and that they and the carpenter have all three disappeared. I also seem to have misunderstood the Vali as saying that the two Armenians who were staying in the house belong to this part of the country. One of them, according to the inclosed newspaper extract, is from Erzeroum.

The Vali's son, Said Bey, left for Constantinople the day before yesterday. I hear that he had some prisoners with him.

As to the form and nature of the bombs, the eighty large ones, which have not been seen by any one outside the Turkish Government service, are stated to be of exactly the same kind as the small ones which I have described. There may be internal caps in all the bombs, but this is unknown, as none have been opened.

It seems clear that external caps would be useless, and that the mere driving of nails into dynamite might or might not cause explosion.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 85.

Extract from the "Ahenk" of August 13 (26), 1905.

(Translation.)

INGRATITUDE IN RETURN FOR KINDNESS AND GOVERNMENT SUCCESS.—At a time when the Imperial Government was trying to arrest some Armenians of whose bad intentions it had received information, a report was received that one Kevork Abtalian and Sotrak Papasian, a native of Erzeroum, were hiding in the house of Andronik, a joiner.

In some manner not yet ascertained Kevork got wounded in the breast by gunshots.

Subsequently both went out of the house and disappeared. The result of the search made in consequence of this accident, which attracted attention, was that a great number of bombs and considerable quantity of dynamite and other destructive substances were secured, and, by the aid of indications left by the men, petroleum tins filled by them were found under the piers of two bridges on the Aidin Railway; and thus, fortunately, a great disaster, which it was intended and which might have caused the death of many, both foreigners and natives, and great destruction of property, was averted.

A Special Commission of Inquiry is sitting day and night, under the presidency of his Highness the Governor-General, and supreme efforts are being put forward both by the police and gendarmerie to find out the authors of these crimes.

There is no doubt whatever that they also, like others before them, will be secured and will receive their due punishment.

No. 86.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received September* 4.)

(No. 599.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 29, 1905.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 573 of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting on the recent disturbances in that town.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 86.

Vice-Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 27.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, August* 12, 1905.

WITH reference to and in confirmation of my recent telegrams, I have the honour to report as follows on the present situation:—

Since Sunday last I have been in close touch with the Notables of the town and knew, therefore, that they meditated some such *coup* as they actually carried out on Wednesday. It was this knowledge that prompted my telegram to your Excellency of the 8th, though I was unwilling at the time to go into details, as I could not tell how far the Notables really meant what they said.

However, after many deliberations held at the house of Abdul Kader Pasha, they decided on Wednesday morning to try and force the hands of the Government, and sent out criers into the market ordering all shops to be closed and every one to assemble at the telegraph-office. A real panic ensued, Christians—men, women, and children—fleeing to their houses under the impression that the massacre of ten years ago was beginning again. This is hardly to be wondered at, for, from what I hear on all sides, the Moslems, Notables and populace, keep the Christians in a constant state of expectation of robbery and violence.

The panic, however, did not last long, for it was the object of the Moslems merely to secure the co-operation of the Christians, and they stopped the beginnings of pillage. The police failed utterly in their duty, not even informing the Vali of what had occurred.

I went to the telegraph-office directly I got the news, and found the Vali sitting in a state of semi-hysterical helplessness surrounded by the Notables, while a large crowd filled the courtyard. The temper of the latter was fairly good, but they had come armed and determined, and they hooted the Vali and the Ferik, who tried to persuade them to disperse. The desired telegram to the Palace was, moreover, extracted from his Excellency. I have not been able to get exact information of what the telegram contained, the Vali's assertion that it was only a message of thanks for the Iradé being, of course, absurdly wide of the mark. The Notables assert that it contained a strongly-worded demand for the immediate exile of Ibrahim Pasha and guarantees for the future. This is also improbable; the message was probably a mild combination of the two.

A comic touch was added to the scene at the telegraph-office by the appearance of the two Capuchin friars in their "chapeaux de voyage" (sun helmets several feet in circumference), who, in the absence of my colleague, have been left, to the total exclusion of the dragoman, in charge of the French Vice-Consulate.

It is beyond doubt that the whole affair was not in the least spontaneous, that the town population, were it not for the Notables, would remain indifferent to the Ibrahim Pasha question, and that it was the Notables, and they alone, who arranged and carried out the *coup* on Wednesday.

As I telegraphed to your Excellency, I consider Nyazi Bey to be the prime mover, abetted by Aarif Effendi, Abdul Kader Pasha, Moustafa Bey, Khoja Mahmoud Effendi, and the brothers Jezirehli Zade. However much the Vali and the Ferik may affect to deny it, there is no room for disbelief that the town was for that day evidently, and, in my opinion, is still, in the hands of these men. They bear the worst of reputations, and yet one word from them may at any moment set up the wildest disorder. The police and gendarmes are not in the least to be trusted, being in desperate terror of Ibrahim Pasha, and the soldiers are half-an-hour out of town. If the gates were closed by the mob, I reckon that it would have at least two hours in which to do as it pleased.

Yesterday, as I telegraphed, the panic began again. Moslems were going the round of the charshi whispering of coming arson and pillage, and the Armenians were emptying their shops of all portable goods. I was also informed by a Christian Notable, who has all along (as member of the Idaré Medjlissi) worked with his Moslem colleagues, that at a meeting of the latter at the house of Abdul Kader Pasha it was resolved to wait a day or two and then do something which would "force the hat to enter the question."

I rode through the charshi, and then went to the Vali's house and found that, though it was already 4 o'clock *à la Turque*, he had not yet come in from the country. He appeared shortly afterwards, however, and on his way from the mosque walked through the market trying to reassure the Christians.

Our present position, then, is one of expectancy on all sides, the Notables waiting for a satisfactory answer from Constantinople and for satisfactory action on the part of the Government against the Arabs, the local "barefeet" waiting for an opportunity to attack the Christians, and the Christians in terror of that attack.

Everything is in the hands of the Notables, and, in my opinion, this is a state of things which should not be permitted any longer than it would take them to pack up their belongings. They have taken the measure of the Vali and have found him wanting, and I cannot see that his Excellency can stay and do the work after what has occurred.

By far the worst of these men is the Beledîye Reissi, Nyazi Bey. He is known as a violent fanatic; he played a disgraceful part in the Chavrashian murder scandal, and has the present Vali in his power. So long as he is allowed to remain in office, I see no possibility of good government in either the town or country, nor can I believe that the authorities are sincere in desiring it.

August 13.—I rode out yesterday to some villages three hours distant, which were said to have been looted or burnt, or both, in order, firstly, to ascertain how far the Notables' reports were true; and, secondly, to find out, if possible, what the villagers themselves thought of the matter.

I visited five villages, one of which was said to have been completely burnt and two others looted. Of the latter, one was absolutely intact, the villagers laughing as they answered that of course the Notables knew their own business, but they themselves had no objection in lying to me. They admitted that the Arabs had done a great deal of harm this year, but evidently considered the reports spread in town greatly exaggerated. I also saw two Christians who had taken refuge there with their families from a neighbouring village, and they told me what I saw for myself afterwards, that of thirteen houses seven had been burnt, and of these seven five belonged to Christians. I believe, to judge from the general position of the houses and of the grain burnt, that the intention of the Arabs was merely to burn down the summer-house of the village Bey, Abdurrahman, in revenge for the publication of the Iradé, and that the other houses caught fire by accident.

The inaction of the Government strikes me as particularly shameful in this case, as the Arabs actually settled there for a week and used it as a base for their operations.

The two Christians whom I saw seemed to me so perfectly resigned that I remarked on it, and received a cheerful answer from one of them, to the effect that it was God's will—last year the Eshreff (Notables), this year Ibrahim Pasha.

This is the general opinion: that the Eshreff are only getting what they deserve, and that when Ibrahim Pasha was not Commander-in-chief of all the brigands the state of the country, excepting in so far as it concerned the Eshreff, was far worse. For instance, the road from here to Birejjik has this year been comparatively safe, whereas last year it was closed. The Notables are naturally annoyed that the produce of what looting there is should have gone entirely to Ibrahim Pasha and his men. Last year they each had their men on the road, and made a considerable profit out of the business.

Of the three other villages I visited, one had been looted and all were deserted. The latter fact points to further intrigues on the part of the Notables. For why should the population of these villages, especially those which had not been touched, rush into town as it did yesterday—i.e., two days after the troops had cleared the country-side of Arabs? I have little doubt that, had I not gone out and seen for myself, I should have had a deputation to-day complaining of the lack of security, &c.

With regard to the forces at the disposal of the Vali, there is one battalion of 350 men in the barracks outside the town, and another just back from Talori, now pushing back the Kurds. His Excellency has also the permission to enrol another hundred gendarmes. Besides these, there is the Esterli (Mule) Corps of about 400 men.

The Defterdar is accompanying the troops.

To resume, I would say—

1. That though Ibrahim Pasha has done a great deal of harm this year, the harm has fallen nearly entirely on the Notables, who will in their own interests be forced to supply the villagers with the necessaries of life for the winter and set them up again in seed, &c., in the spring.

2. That the Christians have suffered little, infinitely less than they did last year, when Ibrahim Pasha was not having it all his own way, and that, by forcing them to close their shops and thus join in their own "protest" against him, the Moslem Notables were of set purpose making them act in a sense directly contrary to their interests in order to induce your Excellency to intervene in the question.

3. That the damage done by Ibrahim Pasha has been exaggerated by at least 33 per cent. by the Notables, who have lost perhaps more by his preventing their men from looting other people's goods than by his men's looting theirs.

4. That no Vali can carry on the government, and that the Christian population is not safe as long as the above-named Notables remain in the town.

5. That, in any case, the position of Nazim Pasha has become impossible, and that, without imputing any actual blame to him or believing the stories of double-dealing and corruption told against him, the force of circumstances has been too much for him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) AVALON SHIPLEY.

P.S.—I have just been informed that an order has come from Constantinople instructing the Vali to report on the sources from which I obtain my information and to have them watched.

A. S.

No. 87.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 158.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, September 5, 1905.*

ARMENIANS. Your despatch No. 594 of the 29th August.

The Armenian Federation at Geneva have telegraphed to me appealing for the energetic intervention of His Majesty's Government on behalf of Armenians in Turkey who are in a state of terror, adding that preparations are, according to reliable Turkish authorities, being made for a massacre by the Government.

Have you any information tending to show that any great or imminent danger exists?

The situation would seem not to be devoid of anxiety from your above-named despatch.

No. 88.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 6.)

(No. 422.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September 6, 1905.*

APPREHENSIONS of Armenians.

Your Lordship's telegram No. 158 of the 5th instant.

Although the activity of the secret revolutionary committees, both Armenian and others, their openly confessed intention to use violent measures for the purpose of

provoking anarchy, and thereby intervention by some foreign Power, and the quantity of dynamite which has been introduced lately into the country are certainly dangerous symptoms, I have no belief in the statement that the Government or any one else are making preparations for a massacre. It is difficult, however, to say what would happen in the present temper of the Turks should the committees succeed in carrying out their criminal intentions and blow up a couple of mosques, for instance, at prayer time.

As, however, the slightest appearance of encouragement to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (whose letter was inclosed in my despatch No. 520 of the 31st July) would be very dangerous at the present moment, it might be as well to ascertain whether this Federation is affiliated or in connection with the Armenian Federation at Geneva.

Your Lordship may, indeed, be pretty sure that even an acknowledgment of the latter's telegram would, under present circumstances, be misrepresented.

No. 89.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 11.)

(No. 615.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 7, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 598 of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Smyrna, reporting the discovery of dynamite in the Crédit Lyonnais in connection with the Armenian plot in that city.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 89.

Acting Consul-General Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 47.)
Sir, *Smyrna, September 4, 1905.*

WITH reference to my reports respecting the Armenian dynamite plot here, I have the honour to transmit herewith a summary translation of a statement in the Smyrna Greek newspaper "Armonia," of the 20th August (2nd September), 1905, about the discovery on the 1st instant of 60 kilogs. of dynamite in a safe in the local Crédit Lyonnais bank.

The local manager of the Crédit Lyonnais confirms this statement.

Agop Ghazaronian, a native of Smyrna, used to come from time to time with a man, who is supposed to be Satrak, and place in the safe valuables, such as coffee-cup holders, and with the valuables packets which were not opened, and which contained the dynamite. He was arrested about a fortnight ago on suspicion of being concerned in the Armenian plot. The Turkish authorities warned the bank that they had information of some dynamite in a safe, though the source of the information has not been stated. All the safes were examined. A peculiar powder was noticed in the interstices of the door of the safe in question, and a small quantity being collected and struck exploded. The bank informed the authorities, and Agop Ghazaronian, whose father's name is Takfur, and who, for that reason no doubt, had given the name Agop Takfurian (son of Takfur), which happens also to be the name of a well-known Armenian of Smyrna, was thus identified in prison, and, according to the Turkish authorities, made the confession. The man Satrak, who has disappeared, is said to be an Armenian revolutionist from Russia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 89.

Extract from the "Armonia," August 20 (September 2), 1905.

(Translation.)

OUR Governor, ever watchful over the public security, succeeded in obtaining some information that a large quantity of dynamite was concealed in safes of the local agency of the Crédit Lyonnais bank. As is well known, this establishment has in its cellars a number of safes which it lets to the public. One of these safes was hired six months ago, under the false name Agop Takfurian, by the Armenian prisoner, Agop Ghazaronian, who confessed the fact, and dynamite was placed in it which he himself, or his associate Satrak, who has disappeared, was in the habit of receiving from abroad. As in opening these safes two keys must be used, of which one is kept by the hirer and the other by an official of the bank, and as Ghazaronian declared that he had lost the key, the police had the safe opened yesterday afternoon in the presence of representatives of the French Consulate, and it has discovered about 60 kilogs. of dynamite, which has been handed over to the military authorities at the fort.

No. 90.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 12.)

(No. 617.)

My Lord, *Therapia, September 6, 1905.*

IN continuation of my telegram No. 122 of to-day's date, on the subject of the communication made to your Lordship by the Armenian Federation at Geneva as to the state of terror existing among Armenians in this country, I have the honour to report that I have recently made inquiries on the subject from the Armenian Patriarch and learnt that his Beatitude was not disturbed in mind so far as the intentions of the Sultan were concerned, and that he accepted the assurances which he received from His Majesty on his accession day in good faith. These assurances were to the effect that all his subjects were equal in his eyes and equally entitled to protection, that there were anarchists and criminals in every country, that it would be wrong to punish the innocent with the guilty, and that he most positively assured his Beatitude that no peaceful and law-abiding Armenian would be injured or molested. His Majesty added, however, that he was determined not to allow the public security to be disturbed, and that anarchists and others who attempted criminal acts would be punished in the severest manner.

On the 31st ultimo, when numerous rumours of dynamite plots and other outrages were current, His Majesty sent his Grand Master of Ceremonies to tell me that, although he was determined to protect his own life if he could and to maintain public security at all costs, I might feel assured and confident that neither Armenians nor any other innocent persons would be disturbed or molested.

Among the people, and especially in certain official circles, there appears to be a good deal of uneasiness as to the action of the secret Committees and the danger of an outbreak of fanaticism among the Turks if any serious outrages are committed by the revolutionaries in the capital itself or in any populous city or town.

The fact that large quantities of dynamite have been discovered here and at Smyrna, and a few days ago also at the Pirœus, and that more is known to have passed into the country, leads to the belief that, although the secret Committees are deterred for the moment from their criminal acts owing to the extraordinary precautions of the police, their revolutionary designs are extending, and will again take shape and form at no very distant date. It is quite probable, however, that in the meantime the police will find some informer to reveal their plots and thus effectually stop their execution for the present.

I do not know the full text of the telegram sent to your Lordship by the Armenian Federation at Geneva, but, judging from the statements in the communication made to me by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation on the 25th July, four days after the dastardly attempt upon the Sultan's life, they should be taken with great caution.

I expect there will at all events be a certain amount of uneasiness for some time to come, as the revolutionists seem to be studiously spreading all sorts of false rumours of outrages and massacres in different parts of the Empire.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 91.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 25.)

(No. 626.)

My Lord, *Therapia, September 16, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 615 of the 7th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Smyrna, reporting the decision adopted at an informal meeting of the principal Consular Representatives to suggest to their respective Embassies and Missions at Constantinople the advisability of recommending the Imperial Ottoman Government to send additional troops to Smyrna with a view to maintaining order in the town in the event of any outbreak of Mussulman fanaticism against the Armenian population.

In the course of an interview which I had with the Grand Vizier on the 14th instant, I drew his Highness' attention to the subject. I said that, if the facts were as stated by the Consuls and that there were only 500 or 600 troops in Smyrna, of which 300 were newly-arrived Redifs, and the police were inefficient, it was not surprising, in the present circumstances, that some feeling of uneasiness was prevalent in the town.

I went on to say that I had full confidence in the Vali, Kiamil Pasha, and felt sure that he would do all he could to preserve order, but I hoped that the Imperial Ottoman Government would provide him with more ample means for doing so by dispatching an adequate force of regular troops (Nizams) to Smyrna.

The Grand Vizier replied that there were more troops at Smyrna than the Consuls had reported, but that the Minister of War was reinforcing the regular troops in the town by withdrawing Nizams from the islands in the Archipelago, where there were no symptoms of disturbances, and sending them to Smyrna.

His Highness appeared to fully understand that the Ottoman Government would incur a serious responsibility if they neglected to take proper precautions to prevent the outbreak of disturbances in Smyrna and to preserve order and public security.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 91.

Acting Consul-General Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 48.)

Sir, *Smyrna, September 7, 1905.*

WITH reference to the Armenian dynamite plot, I have the honour to submit the following observations :—

Though Smyrna seems quiet and though only two isolated cases of the murder of Armenians are reported from the interior of the vilayet, namely, the murder of one Armenian in one place and that of two Armenians in another, the latter case being of doubtful authenticity, still an outbreak of massacre and pillage in Smyrna town is very possible, and the force at the disposal of the local authorities seems insufficient to quell one.

The population of Smyrna, including suburbs, is supposed to be nearly 300,000, of which the Christians and Jews form perhaps as much as two-thirds. There is a large Armenian population, and there are the important foreign institutions, enterprises, and business-houses. The Cretan "Mahajirs" (Mussulman refugees), the number of whom in the town and the immediate neighbourhood is estimated at about 20,000, are especially dangerous, and there are other dangerous Mussulman elements.

The whole force of troops in the town, including about 300 Redifs, brought in within the last few days from a neighbouring town, Menemen, is not more than about 500 and includes practically no cavalry. A battalion of these Menemen Redifs was

brought in, but half of it has been sent along the railway lines to protect them. The 200 or so of police and zaptiehs, including again practically no mounted men, are an additional not very powerful force in the town. It would appear advisable to have a much larger force of troops, including cavalry, and my Italian, French, German, Austrian, and Belgian colleagues, and perhaps others, are now writing to their respective Embassies, in that sense. It was decided, at an informal meeting of the five Consular Representatives named and myself, that the suggestion should be sent to Constantinople, so that the Embassies might recommend it to the Imperial Government, and I would respectfully submit that it would be well that your Excellency should do so. It is felt that the hands of the Vali would be strengthened by the Embassies requesting the presence of more troops in Smyrna—about 1,000 more men than there are here now, or as many more beyond the 1,000 as are available.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

No. 92.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 25.)

(No. 640.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 19, 1905.*

IN the course of conversation a few days ago, the Grand Vizier asked me whether I had received any disquieting reports respecting the condition of affairs throughout Armenia—at Erzeroum, Van, Bitlis, Sivas, &c., and assured me that special instructions had been sent to all the local authorities in those parts to take particular care to prevent a conflict of races such as was now occurring in the Caucasus, and to see that no attack was made upon the Armenian inhabitants of the country.

There is, I believe, a very general belief among the Turks, which I regret to notice has not abated within the last fortnight, but rather increased, that the Armenians are planning some general attack upon the constituted authorities, either by the use of dynamite or other means. In fact, this idea is so prevalent just at present that it constitutes a real danger in itself, as the Moslems are said to be in fear of their lives, and preparing for sanguinary reprisals in case of attack.

The Sultan has appealed to the Armenian Patriarch, Monseigneur Ormanian, to address an encyclical letter to his co-religionists, enjoining them not to abet the Anarchists and disturbers of the peace, and assuring them of the protection of the authorities if they keep quiet. Up to about ten days ago his Beatitude, with whom I have been in touch, did not appear to be at all disturbed at the condition of things or to share the anxiety felt in some quarters as to eventualities, but of late I understand that he is somewhat uneasy, and this is rather borne out by his asking my first dragoman to call on him at an early date, as he has a communication to make to me.

Meantime extraordinary precautions are being taken by the police, and public order is admirably maintained so far, although not without much personal annoyance to many suspected but innocent persons, who have been subjected to arrest and imprisonment on the flimsiest charges.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 93.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 335.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, September 28, 1905.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 626 of the 16th instant, relative to the possibility of an outbreak of Mussulman fanaticism against the Armenian population of Smyrna.

I approve your action in impressing upon the Grand Vizier the importance of dispatching an adequate force of regular troops to Smyrna as a precautionary measure.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 94.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 2.)

(No. 654.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 25, 1905.*

IN my despatch No. 640 of the 19th instant I had the honour to report to your Lordship that the Armenian Patriarch, Mgr. Ormanian, had of late showed signs of uneasiness with regard to the safety of the Armenian population in Turkey, and had expressed the wish to see the First Dragoman of His Majesty's Embassy, to whom he had a communication to make.

Mr. Lamb called on his Beatitude on the 21st instant, who admitted to him that he was, in fact, becoming rather anxious about the situation. The Patriarch went on to say that he had latterly received private warnings from the Sultan's First Secretary, the Ministers of War and Justice, the Prefect de la Ville, and other highly-placed officials to the effect that "he would do well to study carefully the situation and exert his influence in the right way, as otherwise worse things might happen to the Armenian community than befell it before." These messages had naturally caused a lively anxiety, which was increased by the belief current among the Armenians that knives and other weapons were being distributed amongst the Mussulman population.

In consequence of this he had directed an encyclical letter to be sent to all the churches, exhorting the people to remain quiet and abstain from any conduct that could be construed as inimical to the Government, and this letter had already been read in the churches of the capital.

On the previous day he had proceeded to the Palace, accompanied by the Presidents of his clerical and lay Councils, and had submitted to the Sultan a loyal address thanking His Imperial Majesty for the confidence manifested by him towards the Armenian community, assuring him of the fidelity of the nation in general, and declaring that he would take every measure in his power to meet the wishes of the Government, all subversive action or conspiracy being essentially contrary to religious teaching. The Sultan, in reply, had expressed himself pleased with the terms of this address, which was what he had expected from a religious body, and particularly from the Armenian Patriarch, whose fidelity was well known to him.

A similar address is now being circulated for signature amongst the Bishops, and his Beatitude is also engaged with his Council in elaborating an episcopal letter to the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin, begging him to exhort the Armenians abroad, who are beyond his own jurisdiction, to abstain from all acts which could tend to compromise the situation of their coreligionists in Turkey.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 95.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 2.)

(No. 655. Most Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 26, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, as the Khedive was leaving Constantinople for Alexandria in the evening of the 25th instant, I sent the first dragoman of His Majesty's Embassy, in accordance with the usual custom, to present my compliments to His Highness shortly before his departure.

Mr. Lamb found Ibrahim Pasha and Husni Pasha still with the Khedive, who had accompanied His Highness from the Palace, where he had lunched before embarking on the Austrian Lloyd steam-ship "Dalmatia," in which he and his family are proceeding to Alexandria.

His Highness, however, detained Mr. Lamb for a few minutes after these two Turkish gentlemen had taken their leave, and said that he considered it his duty to inform His Majesty's Ambassador, before he left the country, of the gist of a conversation which he had had with the Sultan on the previous evening, after dining at the Palace.

The Sultan, after conversing for some time on indifferent topics, but without alluding in any way to the question of the borrowing powers of Egypt, reverted to

the recent plot against his life. His Majesty said that the police had just succeeded in arresting at Kadikeni the driver of the famous carriage in which the infernal machine of the 21st July was transported to Yildiz. This man was, like most of the others implicated, an Armenian. They had also obtained proof that dynamite had been deposited in twelve different places in Constantinople, and that the Armenian conspirators had intended, if the main *coup* had been successful, to produce twelve separate explosions in places calculated to cause the death of the greatest possible number of Mussulmans. "The Armenians," continued the Sultan, "fancy that they are protected by the Powers, but if they provoke us we will kill all the Armenians before the Powers can intervene at all. After all," His Majesty went on, taking hold of his beard, "what can the Powers do? I am an old man."

On Mr. Lamb expressing surprise that the Sultan should have spoken so openly even to His Highness, the Khedive replied that he had himself been astonished, but the Sultan seemed for the moment to have been carried away, and the words burst from him uncontrolled. His Highness considered the incident so significant and important that he desired Mr. Lamb to inform me of it at once, at the same time begging me to treat the communication as in the highest degree confidential.

It would not be safe to ignore the language of the Sultan, nor yet to take it too literally, for it is unlikely that such an astute personage would compromise himself by such expressions if he really thought that the eventuality alluded to was really imminent.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 96.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October 9.*)

(No. 674. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October 2, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 193 of the 27th March last relative to the continued detention by the authorities of Diarbekir of seven persons accused of complicity in the murder of an Armenian photographer, named Chavrashian, and of his mother in November last, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch which I have received from Mr. Avalon Shipley, reporting that the Armenian prisoners have appealed against the decision of the local Chambre de Mise en Accusation.

In view of Mr. Shipley's strongly expressed conviction that these Armenians will not receive a fair trial unless there is a change of venue to some other vilayet, I caused representations to be made in this sense to the Grand Vizier, to whom I communicated the substance of the inclosed despatch. His Highness immediately directed a letter to be written to the Ministry of Justice, instructing that Department to have the hearing of the case transferred to Erzeroum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 96.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, September 19, 1905.*

WITH reference to previous correspondence respecting the Chavrashian murder, I have the honour to report that the Armenians accused of complicity in it appealed, at the instigation of their counsel, against the decision of the local Chambre de Mise en Accusation.

I was at a loss to understand on what grounds they could have based their appeal, and, on inquiry, I find that the prisoners are under the impression that they have appealed for a change of venue for which there is ample reason, whereas I am informed by a member of the Courts that the document which they signed was an appeal against the procedure of the Chambre, which, I believe, was perfectly correct.

The lawyers engaged by the accused are, like all their confrères here, a blood-

sucking lot, and, if left to themselves, will protract the case indefinitely without any hope of ultimate success.

A change of venue is the last thing they would work for.

The only chance the accused have of a fair trial is for it to take place in another vilayet, Erzeroum for preference, neither Aleppo, nor Kharpout, nor Sivas being advisable.

I am not all convinced of their innocence on the evidence adduced by their co-religionists, but even if guilty they should certainly not be condemned here, and whether guilty or innocent condemned they will be, if your Excellency's influence cannot procure a transfer of the case.

I have, &c.
(Signed) AVALON SHIPLEY

No. 97.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October 9.*)

(No. 681. Secret and Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October 2, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 655, Most Confidential, of the 26th ultimo, and to previous correspondence relating to the apprehensions caused by the recent dynamite outrage at Yildiz and the ramifications of the conspiracy among the Armenian population, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a Secret and Confidential Memorandum prepared by Mr. Marinitsch, 2nd Dragoman of His Majesty's Embassy, recording the conversation which he has had on these subjects with a certain highly-placed Turkish official, as well as information received from other authoritative sources, respecting the present state of public opinion in Turkey.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 97.

Memorandum.

(Secret and Confidential.)

YOU are aware that, since the Friday (2nd July) on which the bomb explosion took place in Yildiz, at the very moment at which His Majesty the Sultan was returning to his Palace from the mosque, a High and Extraordinary Commission of Inquiry was instituted at the Palace with the object of endeavouring to find out the authors of, and all other persons connected directly or indirectly with the outrage, and of suggesting the adoption of the proper measures for preserving the precious life of the Sovereign from such anarchical attempts.

When this bomb outrage took place, the public was more or less inclined to believe that the Bulgarian revolutionists were mixed up in it. The investigations and researches, however, which are being unceasingly carried out by the Commission of Inquiry have left no doubt in the minds of its members that this outrage was perpetrated by instigation of *Armenian* Revolutionist Committees.

The bombs and dynamite subsequently discovered in various houses in Constantinople, and likewise the correspondence seized by the authorities, have convinced the Turkish Government that these explosives were imported and concealed by the Armenians with the object of creating fresh disturbances, provoking massacres, and by this means bringing about foreign intervention.

Now, I must add that the above-mentioned Commission has decreed, and the authorities have carried out, a series of measures which are intended to be precautionary action, but which are, in reality, vexatious measures, which exasperate the public without securing any practical result.

The consequence of this bomb outrage and the subsequent discovery of explosives has been to create great uneasiness in the capital amongst the different classes of the population, while the animosity which prevails among the Mussulman population against the Armenians has increased to such an extent that, if—which God forbid—disturbances again occur in the capital, the Turks will perhaps not spare the lives even of Armenian women and children.

The Turkish Government, which is well aware of this state of public feeling, is expressing the opinion that the Armenians are determined again to try their fate by creating new disturbances; but the authorities state that any such attempt will, in spite of the military precautions to be taken, infallibly rouse Mussulman fanaticism, with all its consequences, and that, after all, the political status of the Armenians will not be improved.

Since the rising of the Armenians about ten years ago, small detachments of infantry and cavalry have patrolled the streets of Constantinople; but of late the number of these troops has been greatly increased, especially in Stamboul and in the main centres of the Armenian population.

These military measures are naturally increasing the apprehension of the public, as they give rise to many comments.

In presence of these circumstances, I thought it advisable to submit the above to the consideration of His Majesty's Embassy, and to add that I have learnt from an authoritative source that, fully aware of the serious dangers created by the present situation, the Prefect of the city and the Minister of Police have recently presented a joint Report to the Sultan, submitting to the approval of His Imperial Majesty the line of conduct which, according to their views, the Government should follow if the Armenians renew their attempts to disturb the public peace and tranquillity.

This Report states emphatically that the Government should leave exclusively to the soldiers, police, and gendarmerie the task of crushing any rebellious movement on the part of the Armenians as soon as it breaks out, and that the authorities should take every possible measure for preventing the Mussulman population from taking part in the repression.

By this means, their Excellencies added, useless loss of life will be avoided, and the insurrectionary movement will be limited to the places in which it breaks out, and not spread all over the city and become general.

I had the occasion a few days ago to speak to a Minister upon the present state of affairs, and I thought it my duty, in the interests of the Empire as well as those of humanity, to warn his Excellency against the serious consequences which would fall upon Turkey if fresh and unprovoked massacres of peaceable Armenians should take place at Constantinople, and I requested his Excellency very warmly to impress upon his colleagues in the Cabinet the necessity of avoiding the renewal of the outrages of 1895.

His Excellency readily admitted the heavy responsibility which would rest upon the Sublime Porte if such regrettable events should be again witnessed in this capital. His Excellency, therefore, for the sake of his Sovereign and country, will use his best influence with the object of persuading his colleagues that it would be essential to take serious steps in case of disturbances for preventing the Mussulman population from interfering in the struggle, and thus avoid loss of life of innocent people among the Armenian population.

(Signed) H. MARINITSCH.

Constantinople, September 30, 1905.

This afternoon Mr. Marinitsch again saw the same Minister, who authorized him to assure your Excellency that he was so convinced of the truth of the considerations which Marinitsch had put before him on your behalf that, if he did not find unanimity on the subject amongst his colleagues and receive support from them, he would himself go to the Sultan and urge upon His Majesty the necessity of taking precautionary measures against a repetition of the events of 1896.

(Signed) H. LAMB.

No. 98.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October* 9.)

(No. 685.)

My Lord, *Therapia, October* 3, 1905.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 647 of the 19th ultimo, respecting the discovery of a number of bombs concealed in the well of a house owned by a British subject in Pera, I have the honour to report that the Turkish newspaper, the "Ikdam," in its issue of the 30th ultimo, stated that the Special Commission of Inquiry, continuing its researches with the assistance of the Austrian Consulate, has discovered at the Austrian Hospital in Constantinople thirty-two packets of melinite, fuzes, powder, gun-cotton, electric fuzes, cartridges, and chlorate of potash, and other materials and implements for making bombs.

The article dilates on the wickedness of the attempts made by Nishan at Krocker's Hotel, Ouscf and Manouk at the apartments of the British subject Jones, and Arakel at the Austrian Hospital, to destroy places of public resort or institutions designed for the relief of suffering, and stigmatizes such persons as lower than beasts, and as the enemies of everything that humanity cherishes. Gratitude is expressed for the Divine assistance granted to His Majesty the Sultan's efforts, by means of which these diabolical machinations have been foiled. The article finally thanks the Austrian authorities for their prompt assistance in the matter.

It is to be noted that this article deliberately attributes to the persons arrested in connection with the discovery of bombs at the three places above mentioned, and whose names are all typically Armenian, the intention of destroying the buildings where the explosives were found, and of killing as many innocent persons as possible. From what has so far transpired of the scheme of the Armenian revolutionists, it seems almost certain that they had no such intention, and that the three places where the explosives have been discovered were chosen as specially convenient for the temporary storage of the bombs and other engines, owing to the fact that the houses belonged to foreigners, and were thus less exposed to Turkish police supervision.

The fact that the news of the discovery of these bombs should have appeared in the Turkish press is also not without significance. Heretofore, all intelligence relating to the plots and conspiracies of the Armenians and the discovery of their engines of destruction has been prohibited by the censors, and the fact that such a relaxation of the censorship has been allowed would seem to show that the public mind is being gradually prepared to revenge any further bomb explosions or other outrages which may be perpetrated by the Armenians.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 99.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October* 16.)

(No. 699. Secret.)

My Lord, *Therapia, October* 10, 1905.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 685 of the 3rd instant, I have the honour to report that, having received from several sources worthy of confidence confirmation of the pernicious effect which the tone of the articles in the Turkish press, giving details of the recent discovery of bombs in different parts of Constantinople, was producing on the mind of the Turkish population, I instructed Mr. Lamb to make representations on the subject to the Grand Vizier.

His Highness, while appearing inclined to admit the possibility of an undesirable effect having been produced by these articles, explained that the Government had found itself in a dilemma. So long as nothing was allowed to be published, the wildest rumours were in circulation. Bombs were daily reported to have been discovered, and explosions and even massacres to have taken place at fifty different towns in the interior. It was therefore decided to allow the papers to publish what had actually occurred, in the hope of thereby checking the circulation of baseless rumours.

His Highness, however, recognized that exception might possibly be taken to the tendency of some of the notices which had latterly appeared, and he promised that he would at once summon the Press Censor and give him fresh instructions, which, he thought, would meet the necessities of the case.

I understand the Grand Vizier to mean by this statement that the Turkish papers, while still permitted to publish a bare recital of actual facts, should be made to abstain from any sort of comment which could be regarded as likely to excite ill-feeling between different sections of the population.

I have also the honour to transmit to your Lordship copy of a Secret and Confidential Memorandum by Mr. Marinitsch, reporting an interview which he has had with the Minister of the Interior on the subject of the dangers to which the peaceful Armenians in Constantinople are exposed in the event of any disturbances being

created by the action of the Armenian revolutionaries, and in the course of which he also raised the question of the publication by the Turkish papers of articles couched in language which was calculated to rouse the fanaticism of the more ignorant classes of the Mussulman population.

Memdouh Pasha expressed himself opposed to the publication of such intelligence in the local newspapers, and stated that the information had been given to the press by the Special Commission at Yildiz, and that he had not been consulted in the matter.

In connection with this subject I may mention that a few days ago two large-sized bombs were found in the Cercle d'Orient, in the Grande Rue de Pera, and some more in a small coffee-house close to the Embassy, which was kept by an Armenian.

The Cercle d'Orient is the favourite club of the members of the Corps Diplomatique and such Ottoman officials as are allowed to resort to European establishments.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 99.

Memorandum.

(Secret and Confidential.)

IN obedience to the Ambassador's instructions, I called on Thursday last upon the Minister of the Interior to acquaint him with the views expressed by his Excellency with regard to the present state of Armenian affairs.

I told Memdouh Pasha that, according to intelligence which had reached the Embassy, it appears that the fears entertained by the Turkish authorities in the provinces to the effect that the Armenians there were about to make a fresh revolutionary movement, were not based on any serious grounds; and I added that the Embassy had also learnt that orders have been given in the vilayets to take severe measures against the Armenians, even those confined in prisons.

Memdouh Pasha stated, in reply, that the Valis have, as yet, reported to him no such apprehension, and his Excellency thinks that the Armenians who are now in prison in accordance with judgments delivered by the Courts cannot be subjected to any further punishment. His Excellency declared to me that, as far as he is concerned, he has given not a single order in the sense alluded to by me.

I then mentioned to his Excellency the publications which are now being made in the different newspapers of the capital, and I said that, in the Ambassador's opinion, the news of the discovery of bombs and other explosives concealed by Armenians in the capital, followed by comments, could not but rouse the fanaticism of the ignorant classes of the Mussulman population and increase the dangers of the situation.

The Minister of the Interior said to me, very confidentially, that these publications have been made directly by the High Commission of Inquiry, sitting at Yildiz Kiosk, and without consultation with his Excellency, who was opposed to the publishing of facts which the Government alone should know, except that of the assassination of the Armenian banker, Apik Oundjian, as this crime was already know to every one in Constantinople. Moreover, his Excellency stated that the entire Armenian nation cannot be blamed for these misdeeds, and innocent people should not be made to suffer for the guilty.

I went on to say to his Excellency that, if disturbances again take place in the capital, and many innocent Armenians are mercilessly slaughtered by the Mussulman population, with the tacit consent of the Turkish authorities, who remain indifferent to such atrocities, the Ambassador is convinced that Europe will not endure a repetition of the events of 1896, and that the Ottoman Government will be in a very grave predicament, and have a terrible responsibility upon their shoulders.

In the Ambassador's opinion, the Ottoman Government should take every possible measure for preventing the Mussulman population, in the event of an Armenian outbreak, from taking part in the repression, and should leave entirely to the soldiers and police the task of crushing any insurrectionary movement as soon as it breaks out.

I stated to Memdouh Pasha that by this means the Turkish Government may avoid any responsibility, and if the Armenians again create disturbances in the capital, they will be limited to the places where they occur, and not be spread all over the city.

Memdouh Pasha replied that the instructions which the Valis and the authorities in the capital have long ago received direct them to prevent the Mussulman population from taking part in the repression if an Armenian outbreak takes place.

Thereupon I requested Memdouh Pasha to express his own views on the situation, so that I might bring them, confidentially, to the notice of his Excellency the Ambassador.

The Minister of the Interior made the following statement:—

"After the explosion at Yildiz the Armenian Revolutionary Committee called 'Khintchak' issued a circular, which led the Government to believe that the Yildiz outrage was due to Armenian revolutionaries.

"Subsequently the discovery of bombs and other explosives took place at Smyrna. I at once instructed the Vali to make full inquiries, and to take every measure to secure the maintenance of public order in Smyrna. His Highness Kiamil Pasha replied that the public peace was not threatened.

"Thereupon, thanks to the exertions of the Yildiz High Commission of Inquiry, the bombs concealed in various places in this capital were discovered.

"When I held the post of Vali, and heard that the Armenians were planning an outbreak, I took precautionary measures which stopped the evil to a certain extent. For instance, I put myself in communication with the respectable Armenians residing in the vilayet, and, in consultation with them, removed to remote places the Armenians whose revolutionary ideas were well known to their compatriots, and in return for the assistance afforded to me by honest Armenians, I gave them every kind of assistance in my power.

"The Armenian Patriarch ought to let me know the persons who, in his opinion, are dangerous men, and ask for my assistance. If he would co-operate frankly with me in dealing with such matters many good results might be obtained and evils averted. But the Patriarch is not disposed to approach me with that object.

"I think that for the present there is no reason for fearing the outbreak of an Armenian insurrectionary movement in the capital.

"The Government has already given instructions to the competent authorities on this matter, and I think that there is no necessity for fresh instructions, because, if they are issued, it will point to the idea that the Government expects such an occurrence.

"The Greeks, Servians, Roumanians, Montenegrins, and Bulgarians have struggled for their independence and have set forth some rational grounds in justification of their movements against Turkey; but I cannot understand how the Armenians can hope to change or improve their present political status. Under these circumstances, I think that their sacrifices are hopeless and useless.

"I fully appreciate the value of the communication made to me through you by his Excellency the Ambassador, whose friendly sentiments towards this Empire are well known.

"I congratulate England from the bottom of my heart on the renewal of the alliance signed with Japan."

After Memdouh Pasha had concluded his statements, I said to his Excellency that, in expressing his own views to him on the situation of Armenian affairs, the Ambassador had wished to show that he considers his Excellency as an enlightened and powerful member of the Cabinet, capable of rendering faithful services to his Sovereign and of doing good to his country when occasion presented itself.

To this Memdouh Pasha replied that, unfortunately, at present, the Minister of the Interior does not possess the power which his predecessors used to have in former times; the more so as now the Valis in many instances, instead of applying to him, write straight to the Palace or to the Grand Vizier, thus lessening his prestige and authority over his subordinates.

October 7, 1905.

No. 100.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 23.)

(No. 719.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 17, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a précis of articles which appeared in the Turkish press expressing the loyalty of the Armenian nation on the occasion of the Sultan's birthday.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 100.

Précis of Article in Turkish Press.

THE Turkish papers of the 17th October publish translations of loyal Addresses from the Armenian Patriarch and his Council and from all the Armenian Bishops in Constantinople on the occasion of His Majesty's Accession. After assurances of the firm and unchanging loyalty of all the Armenian nation to the Sultan, the hope is expressed that, as, moreover, is stated in the Sultan's Iradé, for which gratitude is offered, the misdeeds of a few foolish and unknown persons will not be attributed to the whole nation, which reprobates the doctrines professed by these, and holds their misdeeds in the greatest reprobation. The Patriarchate has taken all the means in its power to prevent the more simple-minded of the flock from being led away by the incitements of such persons, and has further impressed this duty by means of a general encyclical letter containing the necessary admonitions.

No. 101.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 23.)

(No. 726.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 17, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a Report from Acting Consul Catoni at Aleppo, reporting on the vilayet for the September quarter in the accompanying interesting despatch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 101.

Acting Consul Catoni to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 44.)
Sir, *Aleppo, October 6, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a General Report upon the administration of this vilayet during the last quarter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. CATONI.

Inclosure 2 in No. 101.

General Report upon the Administration of the Vilayet of Aleppo for the Quarter ended September 30, 1905.

DURING the last quarter the Military Commander of Aleppo, his Excellency Bekir Pasha, has been in charge of the vilayet. Under his temporary administration the public service has suffered to a great extent. In fact, Bekir Pasha being an old man, and having lately been very busy with the purchases of military supplies for the

Yemen, he could not properly control the officials of the "Serai," and the consequence was that the old rule of the "bakshish" was more than ever in force.

I am in this vilayet since over thirty years, and I must confess that I have never witnessed anything like the present deplorable state of affairs. Indeed, judging from the actual conduct of the Turkish officials at Aleppo, any one would think that corruption, disorganization, and anarchy constitute their present programme.

New Vali.

The New Vali, his Excellency Nazim Pasha, having arrived at Aleppo only a few weeks ago, it is too soon yet to express an opinion in regard to his administrative ability. It seems, however, that his Excellency is somewhat retrograde in his principles. Respecting his antecedents, I beg to refer to my despatch No. 39 of the 4th September last.

Hama–Aleppo Railway.

Some French engineers are presently here making arrangements for the construction of the Hama–Aleppo Railway, of which the sea-port will be Beyrout. It is said that the works will commence early in November next, and that the line will be completed and opened to the public towards the end of next year. This new means of transport will undoubtedly increase considerably the importance of the Aleppo trade with the foreign countries in general, and with England in particular, inasmuch as the agricultural products of the province, such as barleys, dariseed, oats, &c., are very appreciated on the English markets.

Revenue of the Vilayet, 1904–1905.

From the information I could obtain, the nearest estimate of revenue I am able to make for the financial year ended the 31st March, 1905, is shown in the following Table:—

Veighu and Temettu.	Military Exemption Tax.	Tithes.	Sheep and Camel Tax.	Various.	Total.
£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.
96,000	10,000	180,000	70,000	40,000	405,000

A large amount of these taxes, which nominally are destined to cover the expenses of administration, was sent to Constantinople, and the balance was by far insufficient to meet the charge for salaries, &c., which remain still unpaid. The revenue from Posts, Telegraphs, and Customs is not included in the above Table, nor that derived from the stamp tax.

Expenditure.

The approximate civil and military expenditure of the vilayet for the year under review is estimated at £ T. 290,000, including £ T. 40,000 for the Russian war indemnity.

Revenue and Expenditure of the Vilayet of Adana, 1904–1905.

According to information received from Mr. Vice-Consul Loiso, the total revenue of the Vilayet of Adana for the year ended the 31st March, 1905, is valued approximately at £ T. 310,000, including the Hedjaz stamp tax, and the expenditure at £ T. 135,000.

Tithes of the Vilayet of Aleppo in 1905.

Notwithstanding the crops in general this year have been in every respect superior to those of last year, the approximate revenue, however, amounts to £ T. 177,000, as against £ T. 180,000 in 1904. The difference may be ascribed

partly to the fall in the prices of cereals on the spot, but chiefly to the customary secret arrangements between the Turkish officials and the principal land-owners to defraud the Treasury. In the opinion of competent persons, a sum of at least £T. 20,000 has been in this way diverted from the revenue of the present year's tithes.

A Turkish Woman Condemned to Death.

After a long trial, which lasted six or seven years, a Turkish woman, who had poisoned her husband and her little daughter, has been condemned to death, and, two weeks ago, "by Imperial Iradé," she has been publicly hanged near the Citadel of Aleppo in the presence of a large crowd, on which this dreadful spectacle has produced a painful sensation.

Trade.

Very little business is going on presently owing to the unsafe state of the interior.

The Hamidies continue "with impunity" their depredations, and the caravans are now compelled to travel with a large escort, which is a serious obstacle to commerce.

It is reported that Ibrahim Pasha, of Verenshehir, has lately been summoned by the Sultan to proceed to Diarbekir and wait there until further orders, but it seems that he refused to comply with His Majesty's command. In consequence of this fact, a Commission, composed of civil and military officials from Aleppo, Ourfa, and Diarbekir, has been appointed, and ordered to proceed to Verenshehir to the effect of investigating into the charges brought against Ibrahim Pasha from various quarters. I am also informed from a reliable source that Bekir Pasha, Military Commander of Aleppo, in his last reports to the Palace, has strongly recommended that prompt and energetic measures should be taken against Ibrahim Pasha, otherwise, in his Excellency's opinion, Mesopotamia will become in the near future a second Yemen.

Cattle Disease.

Cattle plague still prevails in the districts of Marash and Antah. No steps are taken by the authorities to localize it.

Sanitary State.

The general health is satisfactory.

(Signed) A. CATONI, *His Majesty's Acting Consul.*

Aleppo, September 30, 1905.

No. 102.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 370.)

Foreign Office, October 24, 1905.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 674, Confidential, of the 2nd October, relative to the trial of Armenians accused of complicity in the Chaviaskian murder.

I approve the action taken by your Excellency with the object of procuring a change of venue for the trial.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 103.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 6.)

(No. 774. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, October 31, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout, reporting on a visit recently paid by him to Beiteddine, and his opinion of the Lebanon Administration.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 103.

Mr. Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 67. Confidential.)

Sir,

Beyrout, October 17, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to report that I paid the customary visit to the Governor-General of the Lebanon on the 27th ultimo, and made a short tour in the Shouf Kaimakamijeh on my way to and from Beiteddine, passing by all the chief centres of that district.

I have also visited, during the course of the summer, the adjoining mixed district of Metn and of Zakleh, the centre of the Greek Catholic community.

I was gratified to observe during these tours that the necessary harmony between the sects, and especially between Christians and Druses, is maintained, and, above all, that the general disposition of the population towards their present Governor has improved.

After three years' experience of the Lebanon Mouzaffer Pasha has learnt that the difficulties connected with the administration of his province can be easily overcome by a strict observance of the organic law, by respecting the established rights and usages, and by firmly maintaining the equilibrium between the Maronites and the minor sects.

His Excellency's term of office will expire in two years, and he is therefore naturally desirous to appease all parties, and especially those Consulates of the Signatory Powers and members of the clergy who happen to be unfavourably disposed. In his anxiety, however, to gain popularity, he may, by courting his enemies, lose the support of his friends, and find himself isolated at the end of his term.

The Lebanese are great adepts in the art of intrigue, and they invariably succeed, when their personal interests are at stake, in misleading my foreign colleagues, and particularly those who are new-comers, and have a meagre experience of the country and its people. During my long residence in Syria I have only on rare occasions met a Lebanese animated with true public spirit.

Administrative and municipal improvements are matters of a secondary consideration to him. Those who call in great numbers during the course of the year on the Consuls-General, and especially on the British and French, are mostly officials of the Administrative Departments, office-seekers, and candidates for elections of the Council.

There are many others who present themselves with Petitions of a more or less deserving character connected with judicial cases, and disputes between sects menacing the public peace, where the Consul's intervention is admissible, and often of service for the ends of justice.

During late years, and especially since the development of Egypt and the return from America and other parts of the world of many successful emigrants, the mountaineers have realized that the moment has come to shake off the domination of the feudal Sheikhs and of the clergy, who, during centuries of tyranny, have appropriated the most fertile parts of the mountain, and eventually compelled the peasants to emigrate and seek their fortunes in distant countries. This movement has lately developed a strong Progressive party in the Maronite districts of North Lebanon, and has also caused the formation of a Masonic lodge of Greek Orthodoxes and several members of other Christian sects in the Kaza of Metn, which has its head-quarters in Edinburgh.

The feudal power of the Druse Sheikhs is also on the descendant, owing to the spirit of freedom which animates the people.

Mouzaffer Pasha is fully aware of the situation, but has met with strong opposition from the Sheikhs and clergy in the north, and from the Arslan party in the south, who have combined to thwart him in every path of reform.

After a lapse of forty-four years since the organic law was established, the population of the mountain has increased considerably, notwithstanding emigration, which has removed about 100,000 souls.

Arable lands and forests have likewise increased and risen in value, while large tracts, which were mere rocky wastes in 1861, are now thickly terraced and cultivated.

The most urgent requirements for the public welfare are therefore a fresh cadastre of lands and a census of the population, which have not been taken since 1861. Mouzaffer Pasha informed me that, before leaving Constantinople to take up his post, he obtained the consent of Said Pasha to introduce these measures, but he found on arrival that the Maronite clergy and Sheikhs of North Lebanon, who were specially favoured with the cadastre of 1861, and who pay only nominal taxes for their extensive properties, were bitterly opposed to any change. If these measures were introduced, the revenues of the Lebanon would be considerably increased, and in a sufficient degree to enable the Governor to raise the salaries of his officials and the gendarmerie, who are all miserably paid, but especially the latter, who receive only about 7*d.* a-day, and have to board and lodge themselves on that sum.

The expenses of living have besides more that trebled since 1861, and many officials who do not possess private means, and would be otherwise honestly disposed, are tempted by their impecunious position to accept bribes.

Another measure, which if passed would be a great boon to the Lebanon, is the election of members of the Administrative Council by the votes of Mayors of villages belonging only to their respective communities.

The system established by the organic law is most unsatisfactory as far as the maintenance of the equilibrium is concerned. Most of the members belonging to the minor sects are not the veritable representatives of their communities, but owe their seats entirely to the dominant votes of the Maronites.

The mixed Kazas of Metn and Djizzin may be given as examples. The former district is represented in the Council by a Maronite, an Orthodox, and a Druse. There are 75 Mayors of villages in the Metn, of whom 52 are Maronites, 13 Orthodoxes, and 10 Druses. It therefore stands to reason that the members representing the two latter communities are dependant on the Maronite vote.

In Djezzin matters are worse. This district is represented at the Council by a Maronite and a Druse member. The Mayors of villages consist of 23 Maronites, 15 Greek Catholics, 3 Metwalis (Skiahs), and 1 Moslem, there being no Druse villages or inhabitants in Djezzin. The latter's interests in the Kaza are represented only by extensive domains owned chiefly by the Djumblats.

When the elections take place, the Druse landlords endeavour to gain the votes of the inhabitants belonging to the minor sects and a few of the Maronites in order to secure the majority, but experience has proved that, without either the support of the Governor, or, failing that, a resort to corruption, their candidate has never been successful.

The two Druse members of the Metn and Djezzin are therefore, as a rule, Maronite candidates, and invariably men of inferior capacity, whom the Druses would never have elected as their representatives on the Council.

The latter Assembly is composed of 4 Maronites, 3 Druses, 2 Orthodoxes, 1 Greek Catholic, 1 Moslem, and 1 Metwali.

In its present composition, the Maronite votes have secured, besides their own 4 members, 2 Druses, 1 Orthodox, the Greek Catholic, and the Metwali.

They are thus represented in the Council by 8 against 4.

The Vice-President of the Medjliss, whose post was created by Daoud Pasha, the first Governor-General of the Lebanon, is also a Maronite, and, although he has no vote in the Assembly, his presence there as the Governor's representative is a further advantage gained by the Maronites.

However strong a Governor may be, the equilibrium of the Labanon can never be satisfactorily maintained under the system of elections that I have described, and the interference of the Maronite clergy in the Administration will continue until the evil is remedied.

The visits of Mgr. Howayek, the Maronite Patriarch to Rome and afterwards to Paris, where, I understand, he was the guest of the French Government, have been undertaken chiefly, I believe, in connection with the separation of the Church and State in France, and its consequent effects on the position of the Maronite community in the

Levant. The satisfactory assurances which are reported to have been given to his Beatitude by the French Government, will have appeased the minds of his clergy who feared that the large subsidies hitherto received by them could be withdrawn. I doubt, however, that the community at large will reap any benefit from this encouragement given to their clergy by the Government of a great Power.

The Bishops, on their return to the Lebanon, will take advantage of the situation only to increase their own influence with the assistance of the French Consulate-General, a state of things which always obstructs the administrative independence of the Governor-General and embitters the feelings of the minor sects.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 104.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 4.)

(No. 844.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 28, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 573 of the 22nd August, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, relative to the Commission of Inquiry into the dispute between Ibrahim Pasha and the Diarbekir Notables.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 104.

Vice-Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 40.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, November 8, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 37 of the 16th ultimo, reporting the arrival here of a Commission from Aleppo to inquire into the dispute between Ibrahim Pasha and the Diarbekir Notables, I have the honour to report that the Commission returned to Aleppo about ten days ago, without apparently satisfying the Notables, who have since, I am informed by one of them, dispatched several telegrams and petitions to Constantinople, complaining that they were not accorded a fair hearing by the Commission.

The latter seems to have restricted its labours to looking over the list of the houses and granaries burnt, and the cattle, &c., carried off by Ibrahim Pasha, drawn up by the former Vali, the list of cattle, &c., confiscated by the soldiers, drawn up by their officers, and the list of the Kurds killed, villages plundered, and cattle looted by those same soldiers, besides other claims against the Diarbekir Notables, drawn up by Ibrahim Pasha.

I cannot discover that any conclusion was arrived at, and the general opinion is that the whole inquiry was a farce, leaving Ibrahim Pasha stronger than before.

I have, &c.
(Signed) AVALON SHIPLEY.

No. 105.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.— (Received December 11.)

(No. 880.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 5, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship the accompanying copy of an interesting and carefully prepared Memorandum by Mr. Loraine, summarizing the Consular reports on the political, administrative, economic, and sanitary conditions prevailing in the Vilayets of Adana, Aleppo, Beyrout, Jerusalem, Konia, Smyrna, Trebizond, Van, and the Yemen.

No general reports have been received this year from the Vilayets of Bagdad, Bussorah, Benghazi, Bitlis, Diarbekir, and Erzeroum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 105.

Summary of Consular Reports on the Conditions prevailing in the various Vilayets of the Ottoman Empire.

1. *Vilayet of Adana.*

MR. LOISO, in his report of the 18th September last, confines himself exclusively to commenting on an attempt which is being made to augment Russian influence in the vilayet by religious propaganda. This is taking the form of an endeavour by the Russian Consular Agents at Adana and Tarsus, supported by the Société de Palestine, to obtain the appointment to that district of a Bishop chosen by the Patriarch of Antioch. The scheme meets with strong opposition from the Greek Christian community, who do not recognize the Antioch Patriarchate, but support is drawn from the Arab Christians. A Bishop was actually brought to Mersina, but was compelled to leave again in consequence of the violent conflict between the two parties which his arrival provoked. Further developments of the situation are expected.

2. *Vilayet of Aleppo.*

From Mr. Catoni's report of the 30th June, it would appear that this vilayet suffers to a great extent from the disturbed condition of neighbouring provinces. The recall of the Vali to Constantinople is ascribed to the fear that the revolutionary party in the Yemen might find sympathy in the Arab town of Aleppo, and the embarrassment in which the Acting Vali finds himself, owing to the pressure put upon him by the Central Government to supply the Imperial troops in the Yemen with large quantities of supplies, has compelled the local authorities to resort to irregular means of raising money. Further, the drain in the resources of the vilayet in the matter of transport requisitioned to convey supplies to the Yemen will make it almost impossible for the inhabitants to export and sell an unusually satisfactory harvest.

Commercial intercourse with Mosul and Bagdad has practically ceased, owing to the chaotic state of Mesopotamia and the impotence of the Government to prevent the raids of Hammidiehs, Kurds, and Shammars.

Thanks to the exorbitant demands of the Central Government, the financial condition of the vilayet is going from bad to worse. No money is available for public works. The judicial administration is as defective as ever, and the one redeeming feature seems to be good general health and an absence of epidemic disease.

3. *Vilayet of Beyrout.*

Order continues to be maintained by Khalil Pasha, the Vali, who seems to have an efficient police force, but much indignation has been caused by the activity of Palace spies, who, wishing to show their loyalty in the face of the disaffection caused by events in the Yemen, have caused the houses of many peaceful inhabitants, mostly Moslems, to be searched for treasonable documents.

The Syrians, never content under Turkish rule, are certainly affected by the Yemen revolt, but Mr. Drummond-Hay denies the allegation that any revolutionary league has been formed among them.

A contraband trade in arms and ammunition flourishes all along the Syrian coast, apparently with the connivance of the local authorities.

British interests at Saida have profited by the dismissal of a corrupt Kaimakam.

4. *Mutessarifat of Jerusalem.*

The report sent in by Mr. Dickson is on the whole satisfactory. The trade of Palestine shows a distinct improvement; the harvest was good and abundant, though oppressive taxation prevented the peasants from profiting by it to relieve their hardships. Nothing occurred during the quarter to disturb public tranquillity, and there was very little crime to record. An epidemic of scarlet fever, however, was fatal to numbers of the poorer classes.

5. *Vilayet of Konia.*

The recent attempt on the Sultan at Constantinople, and the abortive plot to blow up the Government buildings and foreign Consulates at Smyrna, have caused the authorities to adopt a distrustful attitude towards Armenians in this vilayet. Mr. Sayabalian hints at a desire among the lower Moslem classes to start a fresh Armenian massacre, but adds that the authorities of the vilayet are anxious to maintain order, and consequently opposed to such a course.

Bands of well-armed brigands, who call themselves tobacco smugglers, are a scourge to Mussulman and Christian alike in the country districts, and no steps are taken by the authorities to check their depredations.

Complaint is made of the difficulty of getting business with the Vali properly transacted owing to Faik Bey's want of energy, but Mr. Sayabalian says that this is the only fault he has to find in this official.

6. *Vilayets of Smyrna, Aidin, and Archipelago.*

A copy of Mr. Cumberbatch's interesting report was inclosed in Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 212, Confidential, of the 4th April to Lord Lansdowne.

Especial attention is drawn to the draining of the revenues of the country as a consequence of the incessant demands of the Constantinople Government for money; to the increasing power of corruption in high administrative circles, and the rapacity of all subordinate officials; to the growing insecurity of life and property owing to the spread of brigandage, more especially in the Aidin and Alashehir districts. Trade, it is true, shows a steady improvement, but this fact is exclusively due to the intervention of foreign management in all business affairs.

7. *Vilayet of Trebizond.*

The last quarterly report was received on the 3rd February, and a copy was transmitted to the Foreign Office in Sir N. O'Conor's No. 84 of the 6th February.

Mr. Longworth is unable to record any improvement in the administration. The Vali is weak, and entirely dependent on the Constantinople Government; the staff of officials is mostly incompetent and corrupt. There has been a marked increase in crime. A gendarmerie badly organized, rarely paid, and ill equipped is unable to protect life and property against the numerous bands of brigands in the Trebizond district. Taxation is increasingly oppressive; all prosperity depends on agriculture, and in 1904 the harvest was small and poor. Finally, the revenues of the vilayet show a decrease of nearly £T. 8,000, or about 1·1 per cent.

8. *Vilayet of Van.*

Captain Tyrrell's despatch No. 43 of the 2nd November contains some interesting remarks on the economic and political state of this vilayet. The economic condition is unsatisfactory, owing to the partial failure of a promising harvest and the high price of grain; moreover, though corn is plentiful in the neighbouring districts, the civil authorities of those provinces have put every difficulty in the way of its exportation to Van.

The political situation is, Captain Tyrrell states, better than it has been for the last two years. He is of opinion, however, that a small cause, such as the arrival of revolutionists, an isolated murder, or some petty quarrel, might give rise to unexpected

occurrences, and convert the attitude of watchful suspicion with which the Turks at present regard the Armenians into one of active repression.

Trouble is not apprehended during the ensuing winter, more particularly as the absence of many revolutionists, who have found scope for their activities in the Caucasus, makes for the maintenance of order.

Captain Tyrrell hints at the possibility of the Central Government taking some action which would lead to "events," and considers that such action would probably be prefaced by the arbitrary removal of the Vali, Tahir Pasha. As long as he remains Captain Tyrrell is not apprehensive of any such attempt.

9. *Vilayet of the Yemen.*

Two reports from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Hodeidah were transmitted to the Foreign Office in Sir N. O'Conor's No. 574 and No. 792.

Dr. Richardson in these despatches confines himself almost exclusively to an account of the military operations against the Yemen rebels.

The state of revolt in which this province has been for some time past and the measures taken to restore order have naturally resulted in the complete disorganization of all trade and industry and in large tracts of cultivable land being laid waste.

The majority of the inhabitants are starving, famine prices prevail, supplies are very scarce, and all transport is requisitioned by the military authorities.

It may be hoped that the vilayet will return to its normal condition before long, as most of the civil administrative posts have been refilled, and civil government has been re-established at Sanaa under Mahmoud Nedim Bey, Mouavin of the Governor-General.

The most prominent feature of these reports seems to be the paralyzing influence exerted on provincial administration by the undue centralization of government at Constantinople.

This is particularly illustrated—

1. By the inability of a Provincial Government to apply local revenues to its own needs, owing to the constant demands for money made upon it by the Central Government and the resultant economic instability which characterizes the Ottoman vilayet.

The increased expenditure incurred by the military operations in the Yemen has latterly accentuated this point, and it might usefully be estimated how widespread would be the sufferings of all Ottoman subjects were the Empire involved in general war.

2. The complete dependence of the local authorities on the Central Government, brought about by the fear of arbitrary removal entertained by all Ottoman officials. Further, the local officials are conscious of the fact that all they do is reported, often in an unfavourable light, by the Palace spies, and this system of espionage effectually deprives these officials of all initiative.

3. By the undue interference of the Constantinople Government in matters of purely local interest.

The Vilayet of Smyrna is perhaps the best illustration of these points. The conditions are in many ways favourable to good government. The Vali, Kiamil Pasha, is an enlightened and capable administrator. Trade, thanks to foreign commercial organization, is prosperous. The revenues of the province, if not drained away to Constantinople, would suffice for the maintenance of an efficient administration.

Yet the Vali is hampered at every turn by his enemies at the Palace; his subordinate officials, not receiving regular salaries, are increasingly corrupt; the gendarmerie, badly armed, ill fed, and rarely paid, are unable to suppress the bands of brigands who, armed with the most modern weapons, infest the vilayet.

Administration, both civil and judicial, though far from perfect, is incapable even of improvement so long as the existing régime of centralization continues.

No. 106.

Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received December 25.)

(No. 930.)

Sir, *Constantinople, December 19, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you the accompanying copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting on the disturbed conditions prevailing in the districts of Jezireh, Midiat, and Nisibin, and on the hardships entailed on the inhabitants of the Christian villages situated in those areas by the oppression of Kurdish tribes.

I have the honour to state that I have addressed a despatch to Mr. A. Shipley, approving the representations he has made to the Vali of Diarbekir with a view to obtain adequate protection for the Christian population in those regions, and that I propose making due representations to the Porte on the subject at an early date.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 106.

Vice-Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 42. Confidential.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, December 4, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report the passage through Diarbekir, on his way to Kharpout, of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bagdad. Mgr. Drure had come by way of Jezireh and Sairt, and had thus traversed those parts of the vilayet which are chiefly attracting public attention at present.

The districts of Nisibin and Midiat are in a very disturbed state, owing to continuous fighting between the different tribes. The Christians who suffer in consequence are mostly Jacobites, and their representative at Diarbekir tells me that they are gradually being forced to leave their villages and take refuge in the towns. My French colleague confirms this statement, but adds what the priest was not able to maintain, that the supersession of the Christians by the Kurds is a deliberately pursued policy of the Government.

As far as I understand the question, it seems to me that the Kurds are taking advantage of dissensions existing among the Christians to induce rather than force them to take different sides, and thus expose themselves to retaliation from the tribes to whom they do not belong, while paying heavily for such protection as they may get from those to whom they do.

The Jacobite community throughout the country is being at the present moment greatly agitated by the struggle between the partisans of the ex-Patriarch and the partisans of the Bishop of Mosul. The former was dismissed by Iradé at the request of a great majority of the priests and people some months ago, but has refused to relinquish his position. A majority of the Bishops agreed on the Bishop of Mosul as his successor, but the time required to allow them to meet at Mardin for the consecration has enabled the ex-Patriarch to set the usual machinery in motion and sow dissensions among them, the priests and people. Money has been lavishly spent, with the result that there are now three camps—that wishing the ex-Patriarch reinstated, that insisting on the election of the Bishop of Mosul, and a third desirous of compromising by conferring the temporal power on a new Delegate while leaving the spiritual supremacy to the old Patriarch.

The Kurds of Midiat appear to me to have seized on this, as on other dissensions, for their own ends—to have induced one side or the other to seek their support in their religious quarrels, and to be now profiting by them. Thus, however much the Kurds may be persecuting the Jacobite villagers of Midiat, there is, I am convinced, one party or the other of the Christians not ill-pleased to see them do it.

The case of the villages of Jezireh is quite different. They are Chaldeans, and are not being set one against the other by squabbles among their religious Chiefs. The question is merely one of ruin by the nomad tribes. On the one side they have

the Agha-i-Zor, head of the Sharnak tribe, of Bitlis; on the other the Tayan tribe, a subdivision of the Miran, of which Abdul Kerim Bey is head. The latter, which spends the summer in the Vilayet of Van, has settled for the winter, or such part of it as the villages can support it through, near Nehervan, Kerke Bedro, and Takyan, and the Chaldean Bishop assures me that the inhabitants are being reduced to the last extremity.

My French colleague has pressed the authorities for protection for these villages for some ten years past. For the last six or seven they have been guarded by a company of soldiers. Last spring these were withdrawn, and it was only when the Ferik became Acting Vali that I succeeded in causing some soldiers to be sent. His Excellency said he would send a company, but only sent thirty, for the reason, I think, that there are really not sufficient troops in the vilayet for the police work for which they are required. Of these thirty—in themselves inadequate—twenty were withdrawn for duty in connection with the collection of taxes. I have again brought the matter to the notice of the Ferik, and he tells me that the soldiers were withdrawn without his orders, and that he will take the necessary measures for the protection of the villages. I am inclined to think that he has the best intentions, but I doubt his ability to carry them through, as the Tayan tribe are Hamidiehs, and 400 strong, with Kervan Agha for their immediate Chief. The Tayan, as I mentioned before, are a subdivision of the great Miran tribe, in so far as they form part of the Hamidieh regiment of which Abdul Kerim Bey is Colonel. Abdul Kerim Bey is the son of Moustafa Pasha, whose career was sketched by Major Henderson in his Reports Nos. 1, 8, and 18, of the 1st January, the 2nd May, and the 30th September, 1902, respectively, and who earned, and is still remembered by, the title of "God's Plague." Major Anderson, in mentioning the rejoicing of the inhabitants of Jezireh at Moustafa's death, said it was tempered only by the fear that his son, who was a worse man than even his father, would succeed him. This has happened, and Abdul Kerim has fully justified the apprehension. His father had some excuse for his tyranny and cruelty, for he had a hard struggle to maintain himself, but his son's position is assured, he is master of the best lands, of all the "clean water" springs (a rarity in the Jezireh district), he is rich and a Colonel of Hamidieh, and the population feel that there is no excuse for his terrible oppression of them, Moslems and Christians, but his own vile character.

He is at present, I am led to believe, playing a double game, posing on the one hand as the protector of Christians, willing but unable to prevent the ravages of the Tayan and other tribes, on the other egging them on to bigger efforts to drive the people from the villages he covets.

As against his father, so against Abdul Kerim, Ishak Pasha, the Commandant of Hamidieh at Mardin, and son-in-law of the Ferik, and the Ferik himself are impotent to act.

The Chaldean Archbishop confirmed what the Chaldean Bishop had told me of the straits to which the tribes are reducing the Christian and also the Moslem inhabitants of the villages of the Jezireh districts. But both he and my French colleague insist very strongly that the Kurds are only carrying on the policy of the Government, that the latter wishes to force the Christians either to become Moslems or else leave the country for the towns, and that it is succeeding in doing so to an alarming degree.

I fail, however, to see that this explanation covers the Government's permitting the Moslems to suffer, as they do to a certain extent, at the hands of the Kurds, and the caravans and keleks to be plundered.

As against this view, I have been greatly surprised to find how generally entertained among the Moslems, the Jacobites, and the Catholics (Armenian, Chaldean, and Syrian) is the opinion that the "Latins" are carrying on a very active propaganda through their missionaries, and that they are not disposed to view the persecution of the Christian villagers by the Kurds with unmitigated displeasure, and that the French Consulate does not press for their protection with the energy with which it appears to do so. This in the hope that they will be driven into the "Latin fold." From whatever cause it may arise, and I have little doubt that the Christians themselves are partly responsible for it, there is certainly very great misery in the Christian villages of Midiat, Nisibin, Mia Farkin (the latter, though in the Vilayet of Bitlis, belongs economically to this), and especially of Jezireh, owing, on the one hand, to simple depredation by the nomad tribes, and, on the other, to the eviction of the proprietors from their lands either by steady pressure or by violence. It is an old story, but I am assured that it is worse this year than it has been before, which is likely, owing to

the withdrawal of the troops, and there is a saying, which has become current among the Kurds, that "there is nothing behind the walls," *i.e.*, there is no Government in Diarbekir.

I have, &c.
(Signed) AVALON SHIPLEY.

P.S.—*December* 5. The Ferik has just sent to inform me that he has commissioned two officials to go to Jezireh—one to the Kaïmakim, the other to Abdul Kerim Bey—to inquire into the matter of the pillaging of the villages, and to try and find some way of preventing its recurrence.

A. S.

No. 107.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 487.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, December* 31, 1903.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 930 of the 19th instant, forwarding a report from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir on the disturbed condition of affairs prevailing in the districts of Jezireh, Midiat, and Nisibin.

Your action in approving Mr. Shipley's representations to the Vali of Diarbekir, and your proposal to address the Porte at an early date on the subject, have my approval.

I am, &c.
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.